



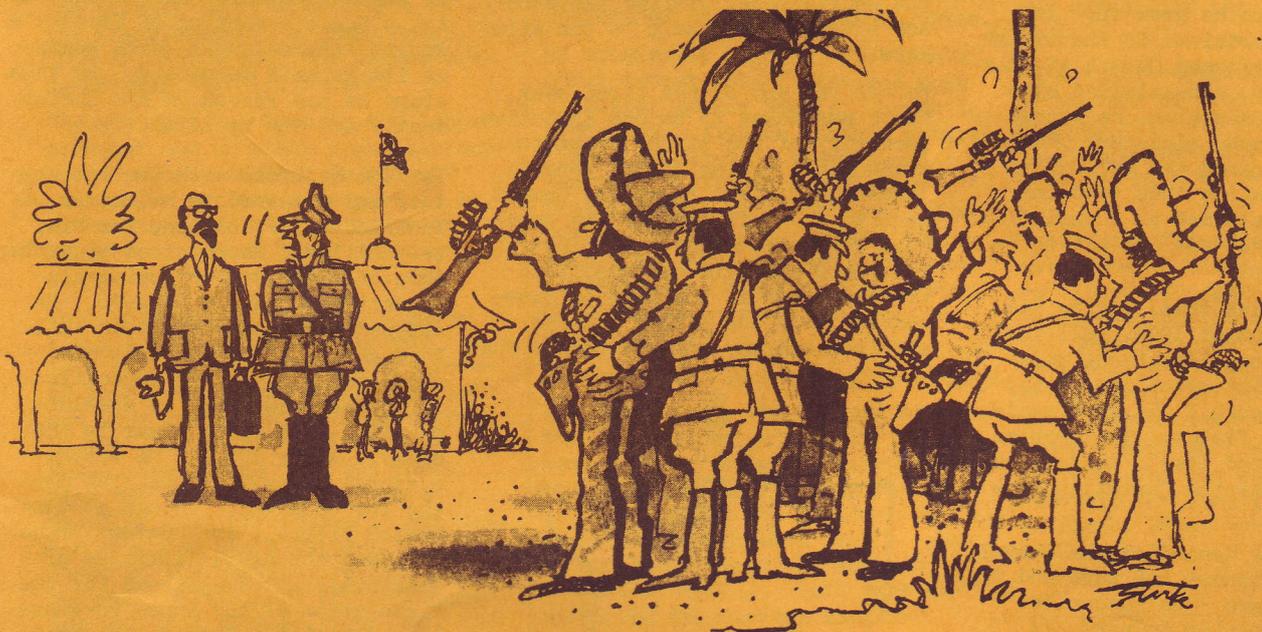
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No.2 Spring '83

GANDHI'S NONVIOLENT HUNGER STRIKES

BY Jim Healy, page 21

ALSO;
REPORT ON TRAINING by Ellen Skillings,
page 24
GOING DUTCH, GOING IRISH
- a discussion on nonviolent action, the
Netherlands, training, and Ireland,
page 17



"We are having a problem with infiltration of seditious pacifist literature."

PARENTS OF NONVIOLENCE

beginning on page 2

DAVITT, SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON,

M.L.KING, BONHOEFFER,

LANZA DEL VASTO, A.J.MUSTE.

A. J. MUSTE — Larry Bond

In an article about the "Catholic Worker" we find the following

"the front page is shared by articles whose common denominator is nonviolent militancy, a principled tactic that Dorothy Day, along with the late A.J. Muste and Martin Luther King Jr., introduced into American radicalism" (1).

Who is this man who, almost without thought, is credited with this achievement?

Abraham Johnson Muste was born early in January, 1885, in Zierikzee, a small town in the Netherlands. Six years later his family moved to Grand Rapids in Michigan where he grew up. In 1909 he was ordained to the ministry of the Reformed Church of America. In 1914, dissatisfied with traditional Calvinism, he became a Congregational minister. Early in 1916 he joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation thus becoming publicly identified as a Christian pacifist. What had led him to this position?

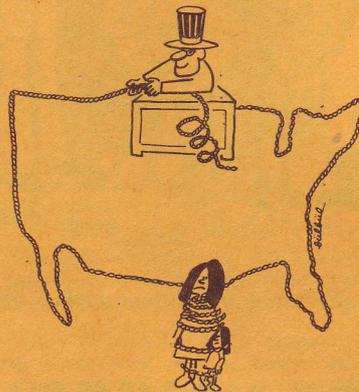
"I do not think that, during the crucial months of 1915, political or economic considerations relating to war influenced me to any extent, although I did some reading in those fields. The problem, as it presented itself to me, was simply one for the Christian conscience". (2)

How could the demand of the Gospel—that we be honest and pure and that we love all men—be reconciled with participation in war? In wrestling with this problem he made a serious reading of the Christian mystics. Thus he came to know the writings of Rufus M. Jones, a leading Quaker, and became acquainted with Quakerism and the Quaker 'peace testimony'. The result of this inner struggle was pacifism.

The U.S. formally entered WWI in April 1917. Muste's pacifist convictions led to his 'resigning' his pastorate. He became active in the as yet nameless American Civil Liberties Union and in support and defence work for conscientious objectors. In July 1918 the Muste family (A.J., Anne, and daughter Anne Dorothy) were accepted into membership of the Friends Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island.

There grew up within the F.O.R. in Boston a loosely organised group called "The Comradeship". This group in late 1918 and early 1919 wrestled with the question of how to organise their lives so that they would truly express their faith in the way of truth, non-violence and love. In the nearby city of Lawrence there had in 1912 been a general strike of workers in the textile industry, the city's major industry. In January 1919 it was rumoured that another strike was likely to break out. Some of the Comradeship strongly felt the need to prove nonviolence in actual struggle, to translate their ideals of brotherhood into reality. Muste and two others, Harold Rotzel and Cedric Long, visited Lawrence and offered their help to the strikers.

Before the end of the first week Muste was asked to become Executive Secretary of the strike committee which meant taking on the general leadership. Thus began his commitment to the left wing of the American labour movement. The Lawrence strikers did not resort to violence even in the face of provocation from the police without and from company spies within. That



strike was won in May 1919. By this time Muste had been elected national secretary of the newly formed radical union, the Amalgamated Textile Workers of America.

In the summer of 1921 he became educational director of the newly established Brookwood Labor College. In his twelve years at Brookwood he became identified as a 'labour progressive', doing pioneering work in the field of workers' education and heavily involved in the struggle to rehabilitate the American Federation of Labor (AFL). This earned

him and Brookwood the enmity of the AFL leadership.

The Great Crash was the background to the forming (by Muste and others) of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action (C.P.L.A.) This became the main focus for his activity after he left Brookwood in 1933. From 1932 the C.P.L.A. was heavily involved in the Unemployed Leagues and in major strikes. Muste was largely responsible for the development of the sit-down tactics. Sit-down strikes took place in the automobile and rubber industries and led to the formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO). The C.P.L.A. moved from advocating the formation of a labour party on the British model to an effort to establish a revolutionary party, becoming the American Workers Party in the process. In 1935, the A.W.P. (or the Musteites as they were called) merged with the Communist League of America to form the Workers Party, U.S.A., a section of Trotsky's Fourth International, with Muste as its general secretary. By this stage he had renounced his Christianity and his pacifism.

In 1936 he broke with the Trotskyists and returned to religious belief and by definition, for him, to pacifism. He returned to membership of the F.O.R. becoming its Executive Secretary in 1940. He opposed U.S. involvement in WWII. Throughout the war he actively supported C.O.s. His opposition to the war was based on absolute pacifist principles—war is the enemy. After the war he became a symbol of radical pacifism during the cold war. Though at this period fiercely anti-Communist he defended the civil liberties of Communists and campaigned for the dissolution of the House Un-American Activities Committee. From this period to his death in 1967 he opposed the nuclear arms race and called for unilateral disarmament. He opposed American involvement in Korea. He was active in the movement against the draft supporting the non-registrant position. He was active in the civil rights movement. All this through the F.O.R. and its subsidiaries the Congress of Racial Equality and the Committee for Nonviolent Action.

Muste wrote widely on nonviolent theory and tactics. He was the leading member of the editorial board of 'Liberation', a journal of the American New Left, from its founding in 1956 to his death.

He became deeply concerned in the years leading up to his death with American involvement

in Vietnam, and strongly campaigned against it. "In the last years of his life, in the face of the terrible slaughter practiced by military forces in Vietnam, he began to stress more than he had for nearly thirty years the qualitative difference between the violence of the oppressed and that of the oppressor. He was, when he died in 1967, more weighed down by the heavy price of absolute pacifism than he had ever been since 1936." Clearly A. J. Muste was a, probably the, leading non-violent activist in the U.S.A. in this century.

He also made a distinctive theoretical contribution:

"the basic fact is that the economic, social, political order in which we live was built up largely by violence, is now being extended by violence, and is maintained only by violence". (3)

The primary task of pacifists is the transformation of this order. This is, I believe, the perspective underlying his life's work.

"My activity has been in the labor movement and in other organisations and movements seeking to effect changes in society or a part of it, rather than to build an image or nucleus of a more ideal community within the larger society". (4)

This perspective poses many questions which cannot be ignored. Particularly are you at times forced to choose between your pacifist and your revolutionary commitments? In the last years of his life, Muste, now in his 80's was faced with the slaughter practiced by the U.S. military forces in Vietnam. His response was a return to the theme of the qualitative difference between the violence of the oppressor and that of the oppressed. "He was, when he died in 1967, more weighed down by the price of absolute pacifism than he had ever been since 1936". (5)

NOTES

1 Dwight McDonald, 1969, in 'American Radical Press 1880 - 1960' Conlin, Greenwood Press 1974.

2 from 'Sketches for an Autobiography' in 'The Essays of A.J. Muste' edited by Nat Hentoff.

3 Pacifism and Clas War in the 'Essays'

4 Sketches for an Autobiography

5 Jo Ann Robinson in "A.J. Muste, Pacifist and Prophet, his relation to the Society of Friends", a Pendle Hill Pamphlet. 235.

M.L.KING

—Patrick Comerford

Martin Luther King epitomises the contrasts to be found in modern Western society: born the son of a poor southern black, he was to take on the might of the richest white nation; the son and grandson of illiterate small-town preachers, he graduated and was ordained at the early age of 19, and was later ranked among Boston University's "best two or three" PhD students; although brought down in the prime of his life, he had written extensively on and campaigned on the major issues facing America and the world in his lifetime: racism, segregation, poverty, human rights, urban violence, and the nuclear arms race.

Martin Luther King did not choose to become involved in the civil rights struggle. Having had a brilliant career, in which he made new inroads in studies of Marx, Niebuhr and Tillich, he was an accomplished linguist and theologian.

He originally planned to obtain a short experience of pastoral work at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, before returning to theological studies and the possibility of a full-time teaching post at a seminary. However, circumstances changed his plans, and King was to become one of those who have greatness thrust upon them rather than choosing it, or being born to it.

The original black community support for Rosa Parks, who had sat at the front of a bus more in tiredness than defiance of segregation laws, was led not by King but by E. D. Nixon, of the National Association of Coloured People, and Jo Ann Robinson of the Women's Political Council. Both were experienced in previous similar causes, and had enlisted the help of the pastor of Rosa Park's church, the Rev. Ralph Abernathy of First Baptist Church, Montgomery. But when Nixon approached one of Abernathy's colleagues for help, King was to reply on the telephone: "Brother Nixon, let me think it out for a while. Call me back."

Martin Luther King is one of history's reluctant heroes. Reluctantly, he turned up to a meeting, and reluctantly he was elected president of the Montgomery Improvement Association being formed at Abernathy's instigation. Nixon was the obvious choice as a former trade union organiser with experience in protests and rights issues, but King was chosen for almost mercenary reasons:

he hadn't lived in Montgomery long enough "to have formed enemies" within the black community, he had the prospects of alternative employment if forced to leave town, and was, in the words of one biographer, "sufficiently naive" to accept responsibility as leader of the planned bus boycott.

At the age of 26, he was thrust into the first position in which he demonstrated that he was already a convinced pacifist. In his initial presidential address, hastily prepared for an occasion he didn't expect, King revealed the source of his nonviolence:

"let us say that we are not advocating violence. We have overcome that. I want it to be known... that we are a Christian people. We believe in the teaching of Jesus. The only weapon we have in our hands...is the weapon of protest."

King later explained that in the first days of protest no-one had come up with the phrases non-violent resistance, non-cooperation, or passive resistance:

"...in the first days of the protest none of these expressions was mentioned; the phrase most often heard was 'Christian love'. It was the Sermon on the Mount...that initially inspired the Negroes of Montgomery...It was Jesus of Nazareth that stirred the negroes to protest with the creative weapon of love...As the days unfolded, however, the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi began to exert its influence."

INTRODUCTION - DAWN TRAIN 2.

Yes, well, apologies that this issue is so late in coming. It's due not to a lack of commitment on our part but a lack of peoplepower to get the issue out. However, we think you'll agree the content is worth waiting for!

We aim to get Dawn Train out once or twice a year. Subscriptions are £2 for 4 issues or £3 airmail, to Dawn, 1 Belgrave Square, Rathmines, Dublin 6. Further copies of this issue at 40p plus post (or sale/return); copies of Dawn Train 1 still available at 30p plus postage.

With solidarity,
— The Dawn group.

ERRATA FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING ARTICLE

On page 4, 2nd column, after "At various times, Martin Luther King was president of the Southern Christian Leadership conference.", go to page 5 column 1 and read to column 2, page 5 through "This prize was to draw the attention of the world's me-". Then go to page 4, column 3.

From bottom of column 3, page 4 go to the middle of column 2, page 5: "class moderate blacks, who accus-", and read to end of article.

We apologise to Patrick Comerford and to our readers for any inconvenience and confusion caused by our mistakes.

Subsequent biographers have tried to trace King's pacifism back to Gandhi, or even tried to deny that King was a pacifist at all. However, the origins of his pacifism can be traced back to his student days when he was challenged by the writings of Reinhold Niebuhr, Walter Rauschenbusch and Paul Tillich.

A Detroit pastor and one of America's most widely respected theologians, Niebuhr in his writings has become one of the leading proponents of a position that has made modern "nuclear pacifism" possible. But Niebuhr, who was once a prominent pacifist spokesman left the Fellowship of Reconciliation before the second World War, and King concluded that Niebuhr had misunderstood true pacifism.

Like King, Rauschenbusch was a Baptist pastor. His books, particularly "Christianity and Social Crisis", and "A Theology of the Social Gospel", written at the beginning of the century, had profound influences on most forms of American Protestant thinking since. King said Rauschenbusch's writings "left an indelible imprint on my thinking", and gave him a sense of social responsibility, although King was challenged by Rauschenbusch and Tillich into believing in a more personal God than either could accept.

King's involvement in the bus boycott soon drew the support of other Christian pacifists involved in the Fellowship of Reconciliation, including Bayard Rustin, a black Quaker, and the Rev. Glenn Smiley, a white Methodist. They soon introduced Gandhian techniques of marches and sit-ins to the black protests. By 1959, King had become publicly known for drawing on Gandhi not for the inspiration in his nonviolence, but for the techniques in applying it, and he was invited to India by Prime Minister Nehru. Later that year he was to move back to his father's church, Ebenezer Baptist in Atlanta, Georgia, where he continued to build on his Christian pacifism applying Gandhian techniques.

But nonviolence and pacifism were never to be reduced to mere pragmatism in his books. "The tactics of nonviolence without the spirit of nonviolence may become a new kind of violence," he warned, pointing out that reconciliation and "the creation of the beloved community" were important elements in any struggle using nonviolence.



King: Patricia Gower fund

King's imprisonment for a minor traffic offence found the Republican candidate, Richard Nixon, staying silent, but John F. Kennedy phoned Coretta Scott King to express his sympathy, and Rev. Martin Luther King Sr., until then still unconvinced of the rightness of his son's action, changed from being a traditional Republican voter. He told his congregation: "I've got a suitcase of votes, and I'm going to take them to Mr. Kennedy and dump them in his lap."

Daddy King and another Atlanta clergyman who worked closely with Martin Luther King, the Rev. Andrew Young, were to repeat the exercise when they demonstrated to Georgia's Jimmy Carter how important the black vote was in electing America's president.

At various times, Martin Luther King was president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference,

and led a march from Montgomery, Alabama, to Selma, Alabama, a few months later when King was arrested and held for four days for his part in a march to secure voting rights.

But King's failures at Selma and Montgomery in the face of Governor George Wallace saw the initiative in the black rights movement move from the nonviolence and pacifism of King, Abernathy and Young to the violence of Malcolm X, Eldridge Cleaver, Stokely Carmichael, and others in the form of Black Power, the Black Panthers, the Black Muslims, and even the Student Nonviolent Co-ordinating Committee was hijacked by Carmichael and others.

King continued to organise, broadened the scope of his campaigning, becoming one of the most outspoken critics of Johnson's escalation of the Vietnam war. Having lost the support of the more violent and radical black panthers, King now lost the support of the middle

chairman of the Freedom Ride Coordinating Committee, and one of the instigators of the Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee. Despite jailing, harassment, rejection by his fellow clergymen, and a split in the National Baptist Convention, King continued to organise, mobilise, and inspire the American black people in their struggle for civil rights.

This mobilisation culminated in the march by a quarter of a million on Washington in 1963. The support that King had acquired in less than ten years was demonstrated not only in the numbers on the march, but the interests represented by the speakers at the Lincoln Memorial: Cardinal O'Boyle of Washington, Rev. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake (a future general secretary of the World Council of Churches), trade union leaders like Walter Reuther, and the leading singers of the age, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, and Peter, Paul and Mary.

King's own speech that day is still one of his best-known memorials, his "I have a dream" speech:

"I have a dream that my four little children one day will live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character. I have a dream today!...

"This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, 'Let freedom ring'...When we allow freedom to ring from every town and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Cath-

olics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we're free at last!'"

Blacks continued to be deprived of the vote in southern states, discrimination continued unabated, blacks were still refused jobs and entry to white shops. But King's efforts were recognised, and in 1964 he received the Nobel Peace Prize. This prize was to draw the attention of the world's media to Selma, Alabama, a few months later when King was arrested and class moderate blacks, who accused him of unpatriotic behaviour. By the time he was assassinated in 1968, American politics had taken on a new shape, and black protest was entering a new phase. But King's philosophy is still relevant to all those who seek a Christian foundation for modern nonviolence, who approach nonviolence not only for pragmatic reasons but for reasons of deep conviction, and who seek to apply it in every aspect of life.

King's message from 20 years ago is even more urgent today. Writing on "Why we can't wait" in 1963, King could be writing today when he said:

"...the wildly accelerated development of nuclear power has brought into being weapons that can annihilate all humanity. Political agreements are no longer secure enough to safeguard life against a peril of such devastating finality. There must be a philosophy, acceptable to people, and stronger than resignation toward sudden death...

"Sooner or later all the peoples of the world, without regard to the political systems under which they live, will have to discover a way to live together in peace.. Nonviolence, the answer to the Negroes need, may become the answer to the most desperate need of all humanity."

Further reading:

Martin Luther King, "Why We Can't Wait", Mentor, 1964, paperback. (recent reprints easily available).

Martin Luther King, "Strength to Love", Fount, 1963, paperback (recent reprints easily available).

Martin Luther King, "The Trumpet of Conscience", Hodder and Stoughton, 1968, paperback, recent reprints.

Peter d. Bishop, "A Technique for Loving", SCM Press, 1981, paperback; contrasts Gandhi and King, relates King's thinking to today's nuclear threats, but questions King's pacifism.

R. J. Owen, "Free at Last the story of Martin Luther King," Pergamon, 1980. A 29-page pamphlet from the Religious Education Press's Faith in Action series, suitable for use in classrooms.

D.L. Lewis, "Martin Luther King, A critical biography", Penguin, 1970. What it says: a critical biography!



TRAIN!

NONVIOLENCE TRAINERS GATHERING

France, May 30 to June 5.

The International Fellowship of Reconciliation and the War Resisters International, in cooperation with Meth Medura (about which see page 17) are organising a gathering of European nonviolence trainers, to be held at La Kora, near Morestel (straight east from Lyon) from May 30th to June 5th. All those already engaged in nonviolence training in Europe are invited to participate.

The gathering will be concerned with practical issues of training for specific actions, philosophical issues behind training, sharing techniques, and general questions about building the strength of nonviolence and the role of nonviolent action in society.

It is hoped to provide a travel fund for those who need help with that. Expenditure per person will work out at something like 200 Dutch guilders for the week, and participants will be asked to pay at least 87 guilders - the cost of food and lodging (or participants could raise money locally).

- FOR FORUM

If you're interested in this then ask for further information from; Neal Bowen, Meth Medura, Weverssingel 7, 3811 GJ Amersfoort, The Netherlands. (033) 722964.

TRAINERS NETWORK, ENGLAND,
SKILL SHARING WEEKEND
April 16th-17th

People from Ireland who've been organising training/setting up a network are welcome to participate in this. Cost will be £3 per head plus food.

It'll take place at the Ryedale Waldorf school, York, the weekend of April 16th - 17th.

Possible workshops include; inner strength, conflict resolution, anger and aggression, the role of the trainer, consensus decision making, games and their use, roleplays - making and using them.

Further details from, and bookings to; Theresa McManus, 14 Mornington Grove, London E.3.

MAKE USE OF DAWN / TRAIN

If you want some thing or other mentioned in (monthly) 'Dawn' or in 'Dawn Train' - or if you have any ideas for what you'd like to see covered, then please let us know.

You may be able to use publications like "An introduction to nonviolent action training", or 'Dawn TRAIN' 1 or 2, or other Dawn issues or pamphlets; we can give a discount on bulk rates. Please enquire.

DAWN, 1 BELGRAVE SQUARE, RATHMINES, DUBLIN 6.

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

— Patrick Comerford

Any review of the leading contributors to pacifism and nonviolent philosophy cannot afford to ignore Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Although not a pacifist in the truest meaning of the word - he was prepared to contemplate Hitler's murder - Bonhoeffer must be considered for his influence on contemporaries such as Martin Niemöller and Helmut Gollwitzer, and "The Cost of Discipleship", the great work of his life, which has had a profound influence on those who base their pacifism and nonviolence on the radical discipleship they feel called to as Christians.

The Confessing Church is an oasis in the desert of Nazi Germany, standing out for its determination as a Believer's Church to maintain basic Christianity, and for its opposition to the most evil manifestation of militarism. Its enduring influence can be seen today in the role played by the Church in East Germany in forming a nuclear disarmament movement which is truly independent of the State (unlike most disarmament campaigns in Eastern Europe) and still large numerically and effective politically (unlike the other independent peace campaigns in many Warsaw Pact countries).

In his memoir of Bonhoeffer, Leibholz noted that "Bonhoeffer did not take the pacifist line, although his aristocratic noble-mindedness and charming gentleness made him, at the bottom of his heart, a pacifist."

Bonhoeffer was convinced that Christian principles must be translated into human life, and his basic allegiance to Christianity forced him to work against the militarism and evil of his country towards bringing about the defeat of Nazi Germany. At the same time, "Cost of Discipleship", concentrating on the Sermon on the Mount and the grace of God, contained a clear condemnation of violence:

"...By refusing to pay back the enemy in his own coin, and by preferring to suffer without resistance, the Christian exhibits the sinfulness of contumely and insult. Violence stands condemned by its failure to evoke counter-violence... By his willingly renouncing self-defence, the Christian affirms his absolute adherence to Jesus, and his freedom from the tyranny of his own ego. The exclusiveness of this adherence is the only power which can overcome evil."

At the beginning of the 1930's, Bonhoeffer had an opportunity to spend a year in New York as a

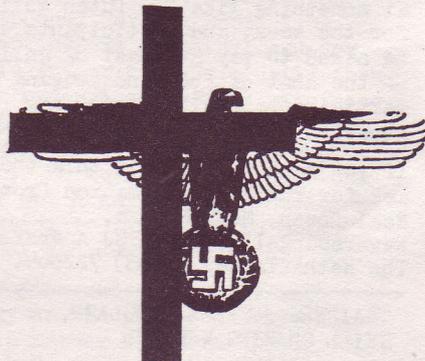
theology student, and came under the influence of many of the leading people associated with pacifist thinking in the inter-war years.

Reinhold Niebuhr, one of his professors at Union Theological Seminary and a close friend for the rest of Bonhoeffer's life, had not yet come to reject pacifism, although he was beginning to reappraise the validity of applying personal pacifism to the realm of public morality. Niebuhr, who was still a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, had a distinct influence on Bonhoeffer, as did the Rev. Jean Lasserre, a French Reformed pastor, pacifist, and author of "War and the Gospel". He drove to Mexico during the summer with Lasserre, and even planned on going to India before returning home so that he could deepen his understanding of Gandhi and his thoughts and actions.

He returned home to Germany in 1931, and although in later years Nazism forced him to question the validity of translating private pacifism into public life, he still maintained a pacifist position in 1932 when he travelled to Czechoslovakia to address the Youth Peace Conference:

"War in our days no longer falls under the concept of struggle because it is the certain annihilation of both combatants. It is in no way to be regarded as an order of preservation in the light of revelation, simply because it is so destructive. The power of annihilation extends both to the inner and outer man. War today destroys both soul and body.

"Now because we can in no way understand war as one of God's orders



of preservation...war today, and therefore the next war, must be utterly rejected by the church... Nor should we be afraid of the word pacifism today. As certainly as we leave the making of the last peace to God, so certainly should we also make peace to overcome war."

The following year saw a pro-Nazi decision by the Prussian Synod to exclude pastors of Jewish descent from the Church, and Bonhoeffer felt conscience-bound to leave Germany and move to England. Gerhard Leibholz, his twin sister's husband, was a Jew, and while his elder brother, Karl-Friedrich Bonhoeffer, was a friend of Einstein's during his pacifist days. In London, Dietrich made friends with Bishop George Bell of Chichester, and also met Gandhi's biographer, C. F. Andrews, and Madeleine Slade (alias Mira Behl), who had become one of Gandhi's English disciples.

Under these influences Bonhoeffer rekindled the idea of going to India, thinking Gandhi's approach to nonviolence could be used in resisting Hitler in Germany. However, the formation of the Pastors' Emergency League and of the Confessing Church found Bonhoeffer being called home again in 1935. Despite pressure from Niebuhr and others, he resisted the temptation to go into exile, deciding instead that his place was in Germany in the midst of the struggle of his own people.

In New York in 1939, on the brink of war, he explained to Niebuhr why he must return home:

"I must live through this difficult period of our national history with the Christian people of Germany. I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people...Christians in Germany will face the terrible alternative of either willing the defeat of their nation in order that Christian civilization may survive, or willing the victory of their nation and thereby destroying our civilization. I know which of these alternatives I must choose; but I cannot make the choice in security."

Bonhoeffer returned home. During his time with the Confessing Church in the years leading up to the war, he had moved away from the pacifism of his earlier years, and in writing "The Cost of Discipleship" had come, like Niebuhr, to find it difficult to reconcile the Christian duty of pacifism in personal relationship with a pacifism in public life. He agreed that "weakness and defencelessness only invite aggression... To make non-resistance a principle for secular life is to deny God, by undermining his gracious ordinance for the preservation of the world."

In his concern for the preservation of the world, Bonhoeffer became tied up with the resistance movement in Nazi Germany. He became a double agent with the protection of the military intelligence while joining the numerous plots to kill Hitler.

When Stauffenberg's plot was finally aborted in 1944, Bonhoeffer's cover was blown, and he was arrested by the Gestapo for evading conscription. He continued to write to his family, and to communicate with Bishop Bell, whom he had contacted again in Sweden in 1942. Eventually a prisoner in Buchenwald concentration camp, he was finally executed only a few days before his fellow prisoners were liberated in April, 1945.

Bonhoeffer, in the course of such a short life - he was 39 when he died - was accomplished in many fields: a linguist who had German, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Spanish, and English before he was 30; a poet; a theologian who had the potential of bridging the great modern gap between Bultmann and Barth; a writer, keen athlete, and traveller; the list goes on. But it is sad that shortly after the war he still proved to be an embarrassment to his fellow Lutheran churchmen: Bishop Meiser of Munich refused to be identified with the dedication of a plaque to commemo-

rate Bonhoeffer at Flossenburg; Bishop Lilje of Hanover refused to allow a church to be named after him; and pastors of Bielfield tried to prevent a street being named Bonhoeffer street by the local council. Pacifists and those committed to nonviolence are often, sadly, in the same bracket - unwilling to remember Bonhoeffer or admit his contributions to where we stand today.

But his thinking has contributed greatly towards the development of modern "nuclear pacifism". His legitimization of violence in the public realm, developed only under the conditions of Nazi Germany, arose out of his concern for the defenceless and the preservation of the world. Today's reliance on nuclear weapons is not a way of defending the defenceless or preserving the world. The application of Bonhoeffer's principles today mean, not an acceptance of violence in the public realm, but a rejection of modern war.

Bonhoeffer's second contribution to the peace movement today is his role in building up the Confessing Church. The Confessing Church's self-appraisal, its re-evaluation of the role of the Church in society and politics, its willingness to bear the guilt

of war-time German Christians, and its upholding of the law of Christ when it conflicts with the law of man, have strengthened the German Church today, giving it an option which was previously not available in traditions of Lutheranism. The Confessing Church has given birth to the thinking of the Evangelical Church in East Germany which is giving the independent lead to the disarmament campaign in Warsaw Pact countries, and providing a necessary balance to the movement in the West which official, state-sponsored peace movements in the East cannot provide. At the same time, it is helping the church in the West to develop a conscientious stand on nuclear weapons.

Bonhoeffer's third and lasting contribution to those who are dedicated to nonviolence and pacifism is his writings: "The Cost of Discipleship" is essential reading for radical Christians, but also for secular pacifists who seek something more than just the material comfort of averting catastrophe. His "Letters from Prison", and the letters, lectures, and notes collected in "No Rusty Swords" are all essential reading for those looking at the development and application of modern pacifism and nonviolence.

FRANCIS SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON

by Andrée Sheehy Skeffington

Writing in the Irish Citizen (the Woman Suffrage Weekly) in 1915, Francis Sheehy Skeffington deploras the general attitude that led to the war in 1914:

"All prepared to be as strong as possible against the day of the 'inevitable' war. None took any sincere or effective steps to make peace inevitable."

And again, in words which would still emphatically apply today:

"Pacifists were fooled by the pretence that great armaments would maintain the peace. We now know the folly, or the hypocrisy, or both, of that pretence".

And answering the argument that "this war will make an end of war", he

prophesied: "War can breed nothing but a fresh crop of wars". How right he was.

With his boundless optimism and determination, he believed, even in 1915, that something could still be done. What he advocated, and vigorously tried himself, was to stop the recruiting of men for the British army. Pacifist comrades in England were doing the same, and the number of conscientious objectors was becoming an embarrassment. In Ireland, the task was both easier and more dangerous. Easier because it made an appeal to nationalism. More dangerous because the authorities looked on the anti-recruiting campaign as a token of rebellion against the British Empire. Skeffington carried on,

day in, day out, from an impoverished open air platform in Beresford Place, near Liberty Hall. He spoke against the war, appealed to men and women (the latter didn't join the army but helped the war effort by replacing the men on the land and in factories) to resist

"Are qualities which lead to success in war those which ought to be perpetuated in the race?"

all war propaganda and refuse passively, to volunteer or be swept in. Many, like Tom Kettle (Skeffington's brother-in-law), had volunteered for the best of motives, "fooled" in Skeffington's words into believing they were fighting for Ireland and small nations. Many were to die in Flanders or at the Somme.

Skeffington's anti-recruiting speeches were soon considered too effective, and therefore treasonable. They included attacks against the suppression of civil liberties in

Ireland under DORA (the Defence of the Realm Act), which made them more unpardonable still. At the end of May 1915, he was arrested. After a summary trial, he was sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour. In his speech from the dock, which was a strong indictment against the war-mongers, their imperialistic aims and repressive policies, he defiantly challenged the authorities:

"It is because I have advocated passive resistance, and because as Conscription came nearer, I have pledged an increasing number to resist Conscription, that this prosecution is brought against me".

On hearing his sentence, he warned that he would leave jail within a week, "alive or dead", and went immediately on hunger strike, and a few days later on thirst strike as well. He was released after nine days, more dead than alive, under the "Cat and Mouse Act", which had been introduced in England to counter English Suffragettes' widespread hunger-strikes. This meant that he was liable to re-arrest at any time, usually as soon as health was sufficiently restored. After some weeks of slow recuperation, he made plans to go on a tour to U.S.A. to put the case for Ireland and for an end to the war. He was not re-arrested, but he was obviously a marked man, when he came back for Christmas 1915.

Four months later came the Easter Rising. The facts from then on are by now fairly well-known. An unarmed civilian, walking home alone, after trying in vain to form a civilian unarmed defence corps to prevent looting, Skeffington was arrested on Easter Tuesday and shot the next morning without any form of trial, by an officer later found by a court-martial to be guilty of murder but insane.

One aspect of his pacifism, however, is sometimes forgotten or conveniently ignored: it extended to armed revolution at home. Shortly before his arrest in May 1915, he made this clear in an Open Letter to Thomas McDonagh published in the Irish Citizen. McDonagh had spoken at a women's peace meeting, against war and against militarism. Yet in the same breath he had boasted of helping to prepare Volunteers for bayonet-fighting, and of showing them "a better opportunity than voting" to achieve freedom. This shocked Skeffington, who was a friend of McDonagh's and in total sympathy with his aim of a free Ireland. Realizing that the advocates of physical force were planning to act soon, he appealed to them, through his friend, to stop their war game, leading inevitably to the "horrors of organis-

ed murder":

"European militarism has drenched Europe in blood; Irish militarism may only crimson the fields of Ireland. For us that would be disaster enough". And more specifically: "I am opposed to partition; but partition could be defeated at too dear a price". No one, however, could accuse him of lukewarm opportunism or selfish class motives or cowardice. "I advocate no mere servile lazy acquiescence in injustice. I am, and always will be, a fighter". His weapons were "the weapons of intellect and of will".

This he had indeed shown during the course of his short life.

He was born in 1878 in Bailieboro, Co. Cavan, but both his parents came from Co. Down, and he had relatives, small shopkeepers, in Downpatrick. His father, Dr. Joseph Bartholemew Skeffington, was an inspector of Primary Schools; his mother, Rose Magorian, much older, came from a small farming stock and had emigrated to America as a girl to make money to help save the family farm.

She was 48 when their only child, Francis Joseph Christopher, was born. They were Catholics, and strong nationalists. Dr. Joseph was an M.A. and an LLB, knew Irish and was keen on the revival of the language. He had very definite views about everything, and about education in particular. He did not send his son to school, but taught him himself up to University entrance. He was a stern but, according to his son, an excellent teacher, as testified by Frank winning prizes and scholarships.



BARRICADES IN DUBLIN, 1916.

Frank then came to Dublin as a student at University College, then part of the Royal University. He had read a good deal more than the majority of his contemporaries, and had already made up his mind about three important questions: feminism, pacifism, socialism, apart from his inher-

ited nationalism.

His boyhood hero had been Michael Davitt, who had made him realize that nationalism was not enough and that exploitation was not the prerogative of the foreigner in an occupied country, but could also be exercised by some of one's own compatriots for their own selfish ends. After Davitt's death, Skeffington wrote a biography of his hero, published in 1908.

"In every such outbreak of barbarism something is lost; mankind is left several steps nearer to the primeval beast."

In 1913 Skeffington was staunch on the side of the locked-out workers, and supported the idea of a citizens' defence corps against police brutality. He left it when he realized that, as the Irish Citizens Army, it was becoming an offensive army of revolt. He had also worked hard to find, among English Labour supporters and sympathetic workers, homes for the starving children of the Dublin locked-out workers. He was mobbed for his pains, by Catholic Actionists, and he was helping a group of children to reach the cross-channel boat. To give food and warmth to Dublin Catholic children in (probably) Protestant English homes for the duration of the lock-out was tantamount, for some zealous Irish Catholics, to destroying their faith.

As a socialist and a journalist, he was in touch with and wrote reports and articles for American English and French Socialist papers (he was regular correspondent to Jaures' paper, L'Humanité). He had been a member of the Young Ireland Branch of the United Irish League but finally joined James Connolly's Socialist Party, and helped to found the Independent Labour Party of Ireland. He disagreed with Connolly in 1916 when the latter sided with the Volunteers and agreed with, or expressed for an armed rising.

Feminism was perhaps the cause he espoused most strongly at first and found an outlet for. His father was not a feminist and was to disagree vehemently with his son's ideas and later with his Suffragist activities. His mother, although from her past history obviously a strong personality, did not find in her husband any encouragement for independence and perhaps lacking in education, too old and in poor health, she had no inclination to be rebellious. Frank, who

loved her dearly may have resented her acceptance of subserviance. But the seeds of conscious feminism were sown in his mind by W.T. Stead, the Editor of the Review of Reviews, a man of

ANTI-CONSCRIPTION PLEDGE

The following is a copy of the Pledge:—

"Denying the right of the British Government to enforce Compulsory Service in this Country *we pledge ourselves solemnly to one another to resist Conscription* by the most effective means at our disposal."

generosity, with an open independent mind and great determination. At University, Skeffington lost no opportunity to hold forth on "the woman question", and his belief in the justice of women's claim to equality. His reputation as a crank was largely based on this. He found very little echo among men students, but a large measure of approval among the women, only recently admitted to stand for the University examinations - not yet allowed to attend lectures - and an enthusiastic response from one of them, Hanna Sheehy. In 1901 he wrote an article for the College magazine which put forward the need for women to be allowed in to University lectures and societies, and the desirability of having residential colleges for women as well as for men on the campus, and a Board or Council on which women should be represented. With such daring proposals, the article was censored by the Jesuit authorities. Skeffington then published it in a pamphlet, in collaboration with James Joyce, who had had an article (The Day of the Rabblement) similarly banned.

He nevertheless got the job of first lay Registrar in U.C.D in 1902, and a few months later married Hanna Sheehy, each, in a feminist gesture, taking the other's surname. He was to lose this job the following year, having been told by the President of the College that he would have to stop his feminist activities or resign. He resigned, and never had another salaried job. From then on he eked out a living on free-lance journalism contributing to most periodicals of the day and Hanna taking her share of the

household burden by teaching. The movement for Woman Suffrage was gathering momentum, both Sheehy Skeffingtons had joined the Irishwomen's Suffrage & Local Government Association, founded by Anna and Thomas Haslam, pioneers of feminism in Ireland for over twenty years but, with others of the younger generation, and with the example of the English Suffragettes to goad them, they became impatient and broke away to form a militant organisation, the Irish Women Franchise League in 1908, in which men could become Associates. For a few years militancy consisted in such activities as regular twice-weekly outdoor meetings and a strenuous policy of heckling of all visiting M.P's, including the Prime Minister. It also hit John Redmond and other anti-feminist members of the Irish Party for refusing to put woman suffrage in the Home Rule proposals. Skeffington joined in this lustily, to the point once of dressing up as an elderly clergyman to get into a well-protected Redmondite meeting. His Northern accent and squeaky voice betrayed him and he was evicted, but he had had time to put his awkward question. In 1912, however, when a member of the Government Party stated in the House of Commons that "there was no noisy demand in Ireland" for the woman's vote, the I.W.F.L went into action, and noisily broke windows in Dublin Castle and other Government buildings. For this they were jailed and several went on hunger-strike, including Hannah, to gain political status, which they got more easily than the Suffragettes in England.

Skeffington condoned the breaking of windows, on the grounds that the women had been cornered into this means of action. One can disagree with him now, after seeing stone-throwing lead to a hysteria of violence. It is very likely, however, that his influence and counsel prevent Suffragists' violence in Dublin and the major part of Ireland from reaching the proportions it did in England or in Ulster. Personally, he never engaged in any form of violence whatever.

His pacifism had first been inspired by W.T. Stead. It was Stead who, in 1898, gave him the idea that something tangible could be done for peace. The Tsar of Russia, Nicholas II unexpectedly, had issued an appeal

to all the nations which became known as the Peace Rescript, urging a conference and an agreement to halt the development of armaments and solve international disputes by arbitration. It was thought utopian by most governments until Stead took it up and started a crusade to enrol the people. Ordinary men and women, he affirmed, did not want war, and could, and should, influence their governments. Forms were distributed and signatures collected everywhere. Skeffington undertook to canvass among the students in U.C.D. The scene has been immortalised (in Stephen Hero), if with deprecating irony, by James Joyce, then a first year student, who refused his signature. Some 160,000 signatures were collected (one doesn't know how many from Ireland) and delivered to the Russian Ambassador in London. With a similar response from other countries, an international conference was called at The Hague in 1899, which was to lay the foundations of the Permanent Court of Justice, and establish the principle of arbitration. It is to be regretted that some of the more powerful nations often forget it.

So it wasn't quite true for Skeffington to say in 1915 that no-one had taken "any sincere or effective steps to make Peace inevitable". He and many thousands with him had, 16 years before taken the first step in the right direction. What he meant was that the effort hadn't been sustained or renewed as vigorously when war clouds gathered later. The patriotic chord was struck, and in 1914, with a few exceptions, the people were stampeded into acceptance of war.

Skeffington believed in a different kind of patriotism, - a patriotism which did not lay down as its fundamental principle :

"We will prepare to kill our fellow-men". He believed in unselfishly working to remove injustices which create wars, and at the same time forging links of understanding and tools of arbitration. He knew indignation and anger and spoke out or wielded his pen fearlessly, but his hatred of what he called "the oligarchies" was joined to a hatred of "organised bloodshed". He hoped to convince many, but did not turn round to see if he was followed or not. At the end of the day, he was not. Yet he did not stop.

MICHAEL DAVITT -

The medium is the message By Leo J. Murray SM



Eviction scene in the West of Ireland 1879, by Michael Rynne

Or.....nonviolence as a way of life is believable when you know someone who lives or lived that way.

Michael Davitt, Irishman, 1846-1906, wrote in 1883:

"Principles of reform intelligently and fearlessly propagated are far more destructive to unjust and worn-out systems than dynamite bombs which only kill individuals or knockdown buildings but do not injury to oppressive institutions... ..The dynamite theory is the very abnegation of the mind, the surrender of reason to rage, of judgement to blind, unthinking recklessness". (1)

- a gem of nonviolent understanding and expression all the more enhanced by its utterance in a time of suffering and popular use of physical force then prevalent in Ireland as the only 'real' way to resolve the people's problems.

The quotation glows all the more brilliantly when considered against the background of his personal life and its sufferings as well as the superb nonviolent leadership he gave to the movement of the Land League in Ireland.

Davitt was not an 'absolute pacifist' - he held to the just use of force as the only way to Ireland'd freedom from the occupying political power. Only the gun and the bomb could settle that issue. His leadership in the Land League reform of the relation of landlord and tenant was, however, governed totally by nonviolence.

Slowly Irish people are coming to appreciate what he accomplished and the nonviolent principles which animated his contribution as well as the heroic selflessness displayed in his exhaustive dedication to the Land League's aims. Mr. Gene Fitzgerald, Minister of Labour and the Public Service, laid the first block of a

£100,000 Davitt Memorial Museum in Straide, Co. Mayo, Davitt's birth-place (the original cottage was torn down long ago). This complex will contain a museum, a community centre with adult education and agricultural facilities.

Said the minister: "It is only fitting that a memorial of this size should be sited close by to where this great Irish patriot once lived and is now buried. He was a man of great personal qualities and determination". (2)

Up to now he has been in a sort of 'twilight' in Irish esteem; rejected by socialists because he stood for private ownership of property and ignored by nationalists because of his social sensitivity - in his day he was regarded as a socialist and communist. (4) He was never such ideologically though advocating state ownership of all land.

Michael Davitt the person

Michael was an impressive, rather tall handsome looking man. He lacked a right arm just below the shoulder because of a tragic accident aged 11 in a factory in Bexenden which is about two miles from his home then of Haslingden, England, where the family had gone looking for work.

Sterling qualities of heart and intelligence radiated from him keeping him humane, sensitive, knowledgeable and sensitive to justice and compassion when relating to other people.

He always remembered the terrifying scene of the Crowbar Brigade (agents of the landlord) coming to throw out the contents of the family cotage onto the road and the pulling down of the roof thatch which was then set on fire. Michael was 4½ years old then standing there with three other young sisters - youngest aged two months.

In 1880, February 1st, at a meeting attended by 15,000 people, Davitt stood on a platform erected over the site of his former home. In his speech he noted:

"How often, in a strange land, has my boyhood's ear drunk in the tale of outrage and wrong and infamy perpetrated here in the name of the law and in the interest of territorial greed; in listening to the accounts of famine and sorrow, of deaths through landlordism, of coffinless graves....."

"What wonder that such laws should become hateful, and when felt by personal experience of the tyranny and injustice, that a life of irreconcilable enmity to them should follow, and that, standing here on the spot where I first drew breath, in sight of a levelled home, with memories of privation and tortures crowding into my mind, I should swear to devote the remainder of the life to the destruction of what has blasted my early years, pursued me with its vengeance through manhood, and leaves my family in exile today ((USA)), far from that Ireland which is itself wronged, robbed and humiliated through the agency of the same accursed system.....if I am standing to-day upon a platform erected over the ruins of my levelled home, I may yet have the satisfaction of trampling on the ruins of Irish landlordism." (4)

His anger was directed to a system - not the people using it. A nonviolent principle. Notice will be taken later about the evil of the system.

At age 19 Michael joined the Fenians (originally chosen guards or soldiers of one of the early Irish kings) and their movement c. 1865. His only Fenian act was leading a detachment of Fenians from Haslingden to Chester to take part in a planned raid there. Later in 1868 he became involved in gun running with the arms to be shipped to Ireland and the IRB (Irish Republican Brotherhood). The maker-seller was a John Wilson of Birmingham. Both were arrested in London and charged with treason-felony.

An incident here disclosed the nobility of heart in Davitt. Wilson knew him as a W.R.Jackson and possibly didn't realize he was an Irishman - a sale is a sale: why ask the customer questions? At the end of the trial Michael offered to have Wilson's sentence added onto his own because of the hardship resulting

to his wife and children. The judge sentenced Michael to 15 years and Wilson to 7 with review of his case if evidence showed he was ignorant of the destination. When John was released Davitt took care of him until his death at the age of 80.

Michael suffered very much at Dartmoor where he finally landed. He did stone-breaking and cartwork as a one-armed person! It was the system that inflicted inhuman hardship on all prisoners rather than intention by authorities. Additionally his intelligence and sensitivity caught up in dedication to a better Ireland deepened his sufferings. (5)

Davitt's recollection of the prison make-up: The iron or ordinary cell was 7 feet long, 4 feet wide, 7 feet 1 or 2 inches high; sides were of corrugated iron; the floor was slate. Cells ranged in tiers in the centre of the hall, one above the other to the height of four wards (the floors of the upper three form the roof of the cell below; 42 cells in a tier - 168 in a hall.

A 2½ or 3 inch space lay between the floor and the door bottom which gave the only ventilation to air and light entering the hall; fouled air in a cell escaped in corner perforations (about 12 holes); some cells had none. It was next to impossible to breathe the air in summer because of the heat; little light came in and fog often removed that little amount. Davitt often had to put his mouth by the three inch space at the door bottom to get any air for breathing.

A cell door facing the hall had a couple of plates of thick nontransparent glass, 18 inches long, six wide. Michael often laid on the cell floor to try and read a book by placing it under the door opening to obtain light. The food was execrable; putrid meat, stinking soup, six ounces of bad bread; some prisoners were reported eating candles, boot oil etc. with some even eating castaway poltices from rubbish heaps.

Labour was stonebreaking in a large shed with 80 or 90 others; blisters often came after one week; cart labour done with 8 men having a collar put over their head and passed from the right or left shoulder under the opposite arm and then hooked to a chain by which the cart was pulled.

Indoors a guard stood by with a staff; outside he had a rifle. Men drew coal, stones, rubbish, slops etc. in all sorts of weather. Granite breaking outdoors in winter was in the coldest corner but indoors in summer. One summer's labour was spent breaking animal bones from the meat supply - the air was putrescent with some 30 to 60 prisoners there; at times he worked at a cesspool or

cranking stones onto wall construction. He spent time in the washhouse turning a machine handle. Every prisoner was searched four times a day; partial stripping in winter.

Davitt was denied a visit or seeing a friend through entitled to them. He was denied transfer to more suitable labour because of his health. Each cell was washed twice a day - difficult for a one armed man to rinse the cloth! Michael was never issued a body-belt as a handcuff so that his one arm would be free as others had. He would return to his cell to find his belongings scattered about as he was dripping wet from work during dinner time thus losing any reading time.

After freedom Michael responded to this degrading time by doing important work in testimony - 1877 and committee work for the reform of prisons in the British Isles - 1898. A nonviolent response to an aggressor - absorption of suffering inflicted so that the attacker can be changed; a 'call to the other' to be human. While in prison he educated himself by reading rather than drinking in the poison of an ideology fuelling hate and revenge.

Once into Land League work he was most careful to avoid any self-seeking or profiteering. Friends in the USA advanced him funds so that he could travel there and lecture or organize support (£303 8s.). It was later disclosed that he had received this money from Clan na Gael which had come into control of it. He asked them to send him no more and that he intended to pay it back as a personal loan. He did that in his last lecture tour 1880 - £200 and the remainder afterwards. (6)

A principle of nonviolence involved? I would say that there was - leadership in any movement must come with 'clean hands' and be the first example of selfless dedication 'for the cause'. The two ladies of the Peace People awarded the Nobel Prize regretted keeping the money awarded for it because it severely damaged their credibility as leaders of a movement asking for sacrifice. Opponents of struggles for peace and justice seem all too ready to denounce them as simply another scheme of entrepreneurs out to make money for themselves. In a word, simplicity of material life throws the emphasis on the realities of the spirit which promoters are calling others to follow.

Personally he had always wanted to bring his mother and sister back to Ireland but was never able to do so. Even his social time in the States was second to the demands of the Land League's work.

The struggle against landlordism

What was the evil system of landlordism which Michael and the Land League opposed?

It was a system of ownership of large tracts of land by English or Anglo-Irish persons run primarily for their own profit and benefit with arbitrary unjust exploitation of Irish farmers who worked the estates. Many were absentee landlords and cared little about the welfare of the tenants who were tolerated as indentured servants either inside the great mansions or as farmers working the land on the estate.

Landlords mercilessly exacted rents via land agents; goon squads were sent to evict occupants and destroy their cottages or hovels in which families lived but who couldn't pay the demanded rent regardless of the conditions or circumstances of the times such as famine, depression, destructive weather etc. The exactions were likened to the medieval torture called the rack as late as the 16th century still used; each demand was a turn of the screw - hence the name 'rack-rent'.

English political authorities originally gave grants of such lands as rewards for military or other services rendered the crown in London once Elizabeth I and Cromwell successfully conquered Ireland. Later owners held them by inheritance or purchase - all in 'due process of law'.

Three lords owned much (26%) of county Wicklow: Fitzwilliam, Waterford and Downshire getting revenues totalling £60,000 to £70,000. 3,000 landlords pocketed £20,000,000 which was nearly ½ of the earnings of 600,000 farmers. (7) In 1870 3,761 owners of estates covering 1,000 acres or more owned 81% of Ireland; 50% of the tenants had 15 acres or less and 75% of the total had acreage of 30 acres and less. (8)

English law and authority in Ireland supported the landed aristocracy and its property. It follows that justice was interpreted in that light by the courts. Rents changed arbitrarily with no compensation up to 1870 for any improvements made; a notice gave occupants six months to leave.

The poor live by certain 'laws' of survival which their impoverishment obliges them to follow. This level of economic life has a certain notion of morality often in conflict with that which money can afford. If a tenant improved his property or income, the landlord raised the rent. It followed, then, that it 'paid' to be indifferent to tidiness, refinement and all effort to 'better' one's material life. People live with the consequences of history

even if the original cause no longer exists. Truth does require the statement that eviction was more the exception than the rule - most farms stayed in possession of the same families. (9)

Those evicted and poor struck back by forming secret societies which then attacked persons, burnt buildings, maimed or killed animals or sent unsigned threatening letters and notices to the landlord side. Connacht had the highest rate of evictions in the 16 years between 1853-1879. (10)

The Land League

The Land League based its confrontation with this powerful giant on the principle of the Irish people having a dual right to the land: a right to live by working it and the right to recover it because it was stolen from their forefathers. (11)

How were these rights of land and political self-determination to be reached? The conflict was between the minority landlords and their legal rights versus the rights of millions of people who were determined to change the system for justice.

Two traditions in Irish history sought to answer this question: a) the constitutional route such as by the work of Daniel O'Connell or b) the gun and bomb route signalled by Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet, the Young Ireland section of the Fenian IRB etc.

Davitt's genius seems to be that he saw that the time had come when the constitutional route could be taken and succeed. Ideas on tenants' rights had been developed before by James Fintan Lalor, Charles Gavin Duffy, John Dillon, Sir John Gray and the English philosopher, John Stuart Mill. A Fr. Thomas Croke (later Archbishop) described the principles animating the Land League when he said:

"Every tenant farmer in the district gives his name to the secretary of the society, who enters it in a book Together with his name, he mentions his place of residence, the extent of his holding, his acreable rent, and his landlord's address. These things being duly registered, the assembled farmers pledge themselves in words of the following import: 'We promise God, our country, and each other never to bid for any farm of land from which any industrious farmer in this district ((Cork)) has been ejected.'" (13)

Others saw that a mass movement for land arising in the country could easily latch onto the political issue. Both Davitt and Parnell who worked with him acknowledged that strength in the land area would lead to increase of will power in the political one. (14) The Land League would be the engine pulling the train.

A visit to the West, Castlebar, 1878, probably made Davitt aware of the rising anger, agitation and effort about to burst on the scene. It was time to act.

He shrewdly saw that the help needed was overseas - Irish Americans. Off to the States he went in 1878 to plead the cause of the tenants and the action to be taken in what became the Land League. Clan na Gael (United Brotherhood), an association of American Fenians, and editors of "The Irish World" (Patrick Ford) and "The Boston Pilot" (John Doyle O'Reilly) took him in tow.

Irish Americans founded the American National Land League and sent over \$500,000 to the Irish counterpart. Additionally a deluge of printed matter came educating the people on issues involved in the struggle.

This aid became an important factor when the landlords put the squeeze on the Land League and legally blocked its own functioning in Ireland. Now a rather formidable force confronted the landlords. Fanny Parnell and Ellen Ford in New York 15th October 1880 founded the Ladies Land League for the raising of funds. In Ireland Davitt proposed that women found the Ladies Irish National Land League managed by Anna Parnell 1881. These groups kept the spirit of the struggle going when male leaders were jailed and the Land League had to operate from France.

Michael returned to Ireland from the States and went to work organising the farm folk for their struggle. At a speech in Westport, Co. Mayo, 8th June 1879, he called on them to believe in themselves and their own power within and rely on it - fidelity to the cause and firmness of resolve would achieve victory. Here a basic nonviolent principle is at work - calling people to use a power of the spirit they themselves possess often unconsciously. John Devoy, USA (1842-1928), emigre from Ireland, and a vigorous personality serving Irish interests via his profession of journalism wrote that the Land League taught the Irish people what their strength was, taught them habits of organisation and discipline and helped them remove fear of landlords. (15)

Davitt himself once commented that drink and moral cowardice were the real enemies of the Irish. No small wisdom there - spotting where the enemy really is.

His genius at organising people recalls the principles and work of a recent community organiser, Saul Alinsky, and his IAF (Industrial Areas Foundation, now located in Brooklyn, NY) then working out of Chicago. Over and over again he repeated to a point of weariness 'Organize, organize, organize' 24 hours a day if you really grab the tail of the tiger of life and want

to get control of it. Life as it is doesn't know business hours as it roars along in unpredictable ways and times. Davitt developed the moral power of the League in order to challenge the physical might of landlords.

Said Davitt:

"The Land League rests upon truth and justice, and public opinion in America demands that no injustice be done to the Irish landlords. It is the irreconcilable conflict against the violation of the Irish people that has led to the land movement." (16)

"If the weak have a just cause they can, by presenting its claims to recognition, force the strong to grant them justice. They can do this purely as a result of public opinion - in other words influencing the part of the strong in their favour by winning public opinion on their side." (16)

"Now it must be perfectly apparent to everyone that if you wish to reach public opinion and to influence it, you must do everything openly." (16a)

Michael particularised specific goals and objectives to members of the League:

"2. To resort to every means compatible with justice, morality, and right reason, which shall not clash defiantly with the constitution upheld by the powers of the British empire in this country, for the abolition of the present land laws of Ireland, and the substitution in their place of such a system as shall be in accord with the social rights and the interests of our own people, the traditions and moral sentiments of our race, and which the contentment and prosperity of our country imperiously demand." (16b)

In this same speech he indicated the nonviolent strategies to be used for combatting landlordism:

a) obtain returns of landlords in a county, the amount of acreage held by each and the means by which landlords secured the land, the farms held by each, the conditions under which the tenants worked the land and the excess of rent paid by the same beyond government valuation. Print and circulate this information

b) publish by placard or otherwise notice of contemplated evictions for nonpayment of exorbitant rent or other unjust cause; call a public meeting if thought prudent as near the scene of such evictions on the day fixed for the same.

c) publish a list of evictions done together with cases of rackrenting stating details (landlord's name, agents, etc.) and the number of people evicted.

- d) publish the names of people renting or occupying land or farms of dispossessed for nonpayment of exorbitant rents or who would pay higher rents than did previous occupants.
- e) publish rent reductions and any acts of justice or kindness by landlords of the county.
- f) defend by law members menaced by landlords and their agents seeking to injure members.
- g) provide assistance to evicted members.
- h) organize local clubs or defence associations, hold public meetings and demonstrations on the land question, publish information for farmers.
- i) establish vigilant-committees to observe actual performance of grand juries, poor-law guardians, town commissions, MPs; report on their performance in office whenever members' interests suggest this scrutiny. (16c)

Michael personally respected the personhood of an opponent and called on others in the League to do the same. An interesting example of this principle happened in a talk he gave at Manchester, England, 21st May 1882:

"Peasant proprietary was ridiculed as ruinous and impossible by the late Lord Beaconsfield, (Hisses). No, no; I must say I don't approve of that. (Cheers). I never carry resentment into the tomb. (Cheers). He was our enemy while alive, but we must be just to his memory - (Cheers) - and when we show mankind that we have learned the lesson of knowing how to be just, we shall prove that we deserve to be free. (Cheers)." (16d)

Further in this talk he said:

"Mr. Gladstone's - (Hisses and cheers) - I know there is a great deal, or rather it is considered by some that there is a great deal, in a hiss, but I for one never practise what I think is reprehensible - to hiss or attack a man not present to defend himself - (Hear, hear and cheers). (16e)

Again: "From every prison in Ireland voices will go forth to teach the oft-repeated lesson that force is no remedy - (Cheers) - against a cause which rests for support and sanction upon the ordinances of God and the dictates of justice and reason." (16f)

Members of a secret society called 'The Invincibles' butchered to death Lord Frederick Cavendish, Chief Secretary for Ireland, at Phoenix Park, 6th May 1882. Amazingly, Robert Kee in his TV-book on Ireland claims that the murder was done by the connivance of high officials in the Land League - the pregnant wife of one of them smuggling the foot long knives into Ireland beneath her dress.

Commented Davitt just out of prison again in England upon hearing the news: "I am confident that if the

healthy feeling of horror which was created throughout Ireland by the Phoenix Park tragedy was permitted to have its full effect upon the popular mind of the country, assassination would have been assassinated in Ireland by the melancholy event of the 6th of May." (16g)

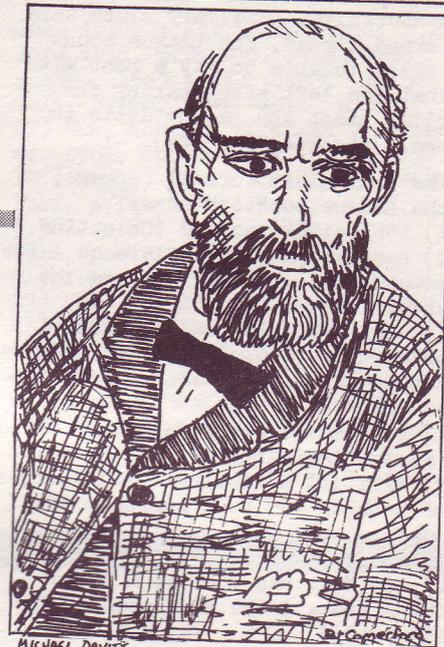
Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-91) enters the Land League movement. A meeting in 1879 looked into the mutual and self-serving interests of Fenians, nationalists, Land Leaguers and politicians (Parnell was concerned with home rule). Parnell's role was that of a political genius; the League was formally founded October 21st 1879 and Parnell became president.

By this time the 'boycott' incident had occurred: a Captain Charles Boycott, rental agent, 1880, at Lough Mask House, Co. Mayo, attempted to collect rent due at a cottage. The Ballinrobe branch of the League took action with a Fr. John O'Malley, PP, president of The Neale directing the confrontation. In Ennis, 7th September 1880, Parnell called on farmers "not to pay unjust rents ... to keep a firm grip on your homesteads ... not to bid for farms from which others have been evicted, and to use the strong force of public opinion to deter any unjust men amongst yourselves - and there are many such - from bidding for such farms." (17)

People refused all social relations with Boycott, even refused to sell food to him. Parnell commented on the boycott strategy, Ennis, 1880: "What are you to do with a tenant who bids for a farm from which his neighbour has been evicted? Now I think I heard somebody say 'shoot him' - but I wish to point out a very much better way, a more Christian and more charitable way ... You must show what you think of him ((the rent collector)) on the roadside when you meet him, you must show him in the streets of the town, you must show him at the shop counter ... even in the house of worship, by leaving him severely alone, by putting him into a sort of moral Coventry, by isolating him from the rest of his kind as if he were a leper of old, you must show your detestation of the crime he has committed." (18)

Counselled Davitt to an audience at Knockaroe concerning the eviction of a Malachi Kelly and family; "...today you and I draw a line round this farm, and let no man dare to cross it with covetous intent if he wishes to live in peace within this country." (18a)

Concerning the boycott strategy Davitt said that it did more than shooting 100 landlords and that the Land League was going to construct a bridge of toleration across the Boyne river. (18b) "The Land League was to be a great moral organisation for a moral purpose and must be carried out on moral lines." (19)



He keenly perceived need of formation and development in the members of basic assertive and affirmative skills if the movement was to succeed. The 'real' enemy was within the people themselves - ignorance, apathy and a criminal timidity. These negative qualities did more damage than English land laws (speech at Blessington, Wicklow, 13th Dec. 1880) (20)

Formation and educational training are key nonviolent factors for such a movement to affect real change that people will want to keep. A Dublin solicitor once wrote to Davitt telling that his inculcation of nonviolence had had its effect (10th Feb. 1881). (21) Michael had sketched out plans for a community's 'People's Institute' which would give enlightenment and leadership to people in a locality.

Action contains its own kind of knowledge and enlightenment not to be got from past experience or speculative knowledge. Maritain called it 'practico-practical' knowledge. Michael urged members; "Act, act in the living present". (22) He saw that people would learn to use freedom by having it: "It is liberty alone that fits men for liberty ... this proposition ... has its bounds, but it is far safer than the counter doctrine - wait till they are fit", 12th April 1882. (23)

The structure of the Land League's organised effort went thus: Form a branch in every parish in Ireland or every barony with sub-branches or tenant's clubs on large estates where that can be done. Organisers of local public meetings for rent reductions were to set up the branches. A committee of president, treasurer, secretary and four others headed a branch; elected annually. Tenant members paid 1 shilling a year with others giving more if able - 10 shillings gave honorary

memberships. Auxiliary clubs were formed abroad. The League counselled tenants to pay a rent with what was left after caring for vital needs and paying debts to small shopkeepers. (24)

The nonviolent 'forces' (powers) of the League counted three;

- 1) rent strike across the nation
- 2) massive passive resistance - the government couldn't imprison the entire nation
- a) open agitation and associated procedures (including court defence) conducted by the League or supported by it
- b) secret society underground action (Fenian and agrarian)
- c) militant homerulers in the House of Commons who took parliamentary action
- d) moral power of representation (7,000 Mayo men visited a Canon Burke and got the rent reduced by 25%). (25)

Parnell linked 2a) and 2c); Davitt was a link between 2a) and 2b).

Landlord opposition expressed itself by the use of intimidation, governmental action (the law) and elections. The economic clout of the Land League forced landlords to come to terms with the problem one way or another.

Goals reached by the Land League were the Land Act of 1881 and discovery plus application of 'people power' in farm folk. Parnell got world attention focussed on the land problem in Ireland. Davitt's nonviolent policy for making change estranged him from the IRB and many Fenians. He knew he was on their hit list. (25a) Parnell's arrangements with the British government while in Kilmainham jail broke friendship with Michael who felt that the League could hold out a bit longer and get its victory.

Governmental acts from Westminster starting with the Land Act of 1881 making the landlord and tenant co-owners of land resulted in dual ownership and occupying ownership. Ultimately the League's goals were fully realized in 1921. (26)

Basically the struggle was now over. The Ladies Land League dissolved in 1882. Davitt became an MP in 1892 but later left political life and continued lecturing and writing. Dr. Moody sees his best writing in the essay "The fall of feudalism or the story of the Land League revolution" written in 1904. (27)

Ambivalence to violence

What to think of his magnificent nonviolent thought and leadership in the Land League and the opposite convictions about the resolution of Ireland's political situation by gun and bomb?

Dr. Moody's scholarly study sees him enhancing his nonviolent reputation as his last years came by but as fervent as ever privately about the use of force for political freedom.

What to think about this ambivalence? Nonviolence is a total way of life, not just a tactic pro tem. To an absolute pacifist the problem could seem to be a let-down.

However total pacifism has its 'logical loophole' as well as do other positions.

Davitt belonged to a religious community, the Catholic Church, whose social doctrine honours both Francis of Assisi, pacifist, and Louis IX of France, Crusader; both are titled 'saints' (i.e. people of examined and certified heroic Christian love). This tradition of holding two 'opposites' together often disconcerts persons not of that community who would like the issue to be totally one way or the other but not both ways. Vatican II calls pastors to honour the conscientious objector as well as the soldier and to assist each in following their conscience (Vat.II, Document 13, 'The church in the modern world').

Fair enough in two different individuals. But in one and the same person?

A prudential judgement seeing non-violence as the best act in one situation realistically might decide that in another situation it would not be a realistic way to struggle for justice. Both decisions could be made in all sincerity, the easier in a religious community which supports both ways.

What's this about 'logical loopholes' in pacifist doctrine?

Karl Rahner, SJ, eminent German theologian explains his view of the morality of the just use of force along these lines:

a. thesis 1: physical force ought not to have been used in moral action (integrity would automatically govern the use of force). However, physical force does exist and needs to be used because of sin. Spirit, love and force are needed to control and manage sin in human behaviour.

It is heretical to consider force as primary, basic, most real and most reliable. Physical force is a reality willed by God in creation - a manifestation of sin.

b. thesis 2: physical force is a gift of God, an expression of his power, a reflection of God in the world. Hence there is a delegated responsibility to handle it justly and responsibly.

Power is an existential of man's existence; it's an exercise of freedom which becomes a restriction of another's freedom without previous consent (oppressed people struggling

for justice do not need permission of the oppressor to struggle). Power and freedom are mutually and dialectically interdependent. Rights of freedom (the spirit) demand that force be absent; rights of power demand that force be present (the body).

Heretical: absolute renunciation of force - an impractical and immoral position (because it renounces human freedom).

Might can be right. Force should morally be the last resort, restricted and humanised in its use.

c. thesis 3: power is a process either of salvation or of perdition. Natural law regulates the use of power. People are able to know the natural law outside Christian revelation though the latter is needed to fully and clearly understand it.

Power is a more potent factor of life than sexuality. The concrete (such as physical force) can be both a marvel and a terror.

All freedom has an eternal validity and an eternal destiny. Power acts in combination with this eternal freedom.

A person will be what he has willed to be and what I and the other have willed him/her to be. (28)

From my point of view, Christ and Aristotle have shared the same 'stage' of Catholic social doctrine over the centuries. Some Christians think that Aristotle has 'upstaged' Christ all too many times with the result that the evangelical Christ has been shunted off into the wings. Biblical fundamentalists would restore Him as the only figure in human thinking. Theologians of the scholastic tradition would have reason be the central deciding factor whatever the heart feels after reading the Scriptures. But the principle that both Faith and reason will stay together keeps both parties in the same community with equal dignity and honour, as it were. It would be simpler with just one way.

I make the point only that Davitt could feel 'at home' with the use of both ways of struggling for justice whatever his conscience directed him to do however contradictory the facts of his life are.

Ulick O'Connor when reviewing Dr. Moody's book on Michael Davitt so often referred to in this article mentions the rather touching note that Michael asked to be buried from the Carmelite church in Clarendon Street because it was the only church that had Charles McCarthy lay in state and be buried from there (1875). Charles was a fellow prisoner of Michael's but because a Fenian and thus a member of a secret society and hence refused the services of the Church. Normally burial would have been from Michael's parish in Dalkey where he lived. (29)

A fitting note closing this review of a great person in Irish life especially for his nonviolent leadership in a struggle for justice was the response of Irish youths to the exhortation of Rev. Jesse Jackson at the Poverty and Justice Conference (see Dawn 86 - Eds) in O.L. of Lourdes church, Sean McDermott Street, Dublin, October 4th 1982 celebrating the 800th birthday of Francis of Assisi:

"If not me, who?
If not here, where?
If not now, when?
Peace and justice in the world
begins with me now!"

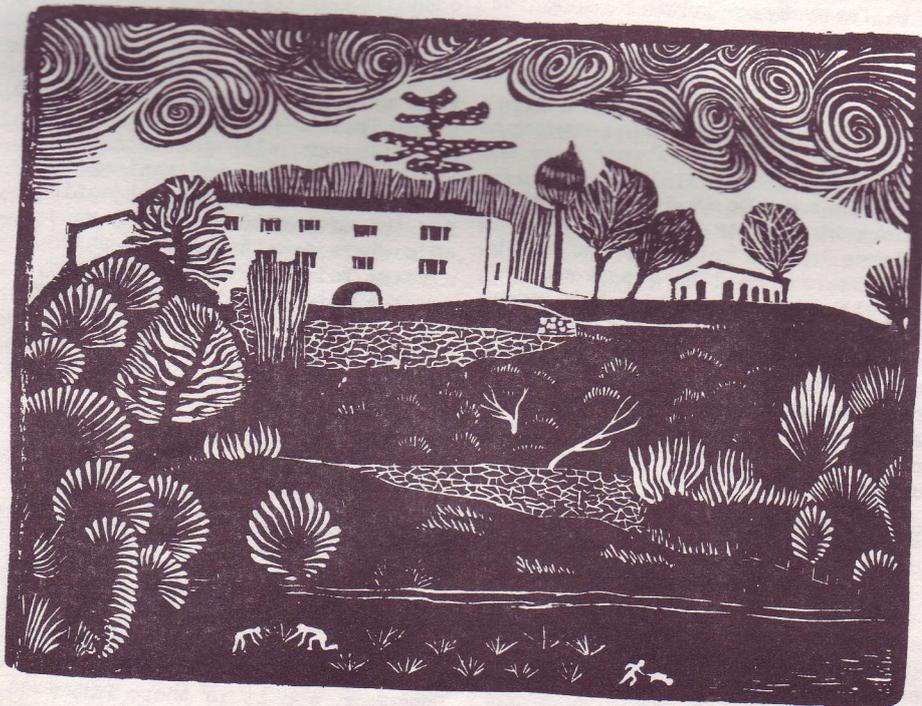
EDS - SEE ALSO THE ARTICLE BY DEIRDRE VENNARD IN "NONVIOLENCE IN IRISH HISTORY" (DAWN 38-39, PRICE 30P PLUS POSTAGE) AND THE 8-PAGE PAMPHLET "MICHAEL DAVITT, LAND WAR AND NON-VIOLENCE" (DAWN 50, OUT OF PRINT).

FOOTNOTES

- 1) Moody, T.W., "Davitt and Irish Revolution", Clarendon Press, London, 1982, p.554. 2) "Irish Times" 24/8/82 p.11. 3) Moody, *ibid*, p.521. 3a) *ibid*, p.306, 323, 495.
- 4) Cashman, D.B., "The Life of Michael Davitt", Cameron and Ferguson edition, 1882, Glasgow & London, p.17-18. 5) Moody, *ibid*, p.159.
- 6) Cashman, *ibid*, p.218; Moody, *ibid*, p.406. 7) Moody, *ibid*, p.445.
- 8) *ibid*, p.29-30. 9) *ibid*, p.30.
- 10) *ibid*, p.32. 11) Davitt quoted in Cashman, *ibid*, p.197. 12) Moody, *ibid*, p.37. 13) *ibid*, p.37.
- 14) *ibid*, p.306. 14a) *ibid* p.454.
- 15) *ibid*, p.390. 15a) *ibid* p.551, 261. 16) Cashman, *ibid*, p.197.
- 16a) *ibid*, p.211. 16b) *ibid*, p.215.
- 16c) *ibid*, p.215-16. 16d) *ibid*, p.156. 16e) *ibid*, p.163. 16f) *ibid*, p.168. 16g) *ibid*, p.165.
- 17) Kee, Robert, "Ireland", Abacus ed. 1982, Sphere Books Ltd, p.131.
- 17a) Moody, *ibid*, p.418. 18) Kee, *ibid*, p.124. 18a) Moody, *ibid*, p.367. 18b) *ibid*, p.432. 19) *ibid*, p.445. 20) *ibid*, p.445.
- 21) *ibid*, p.475. 22) *ibid*, p.515.
- 23) *ibid*, p.528. 24) *ibid*, p.347.
- 25) *ibid*, p.439. 25a) *ibid*, p.293.
- 26) *ibid*, p.535. 27) *ibid*, p.550.
- 28) Rahner, SJ, Karl, The Theology of Power, "Theological Investigations" No.4, ch.17. 29) O'Connor, Ulick, Making historians think again, "Sunday Independent", 30/5/82, p.16.

LANZA DEL VASTO

by Wolfgang Schlupp



He was born 1901 in Sicily. His family was on the way through the whole of Europe, but mainly in France; "We have been everywhere at home, but we didn't come from somewhere". His father had much taste for social injustice. Lanza was educated in Paris in an elite boarding school but he was only an average pupil. After this he studied philosophy. It followed a time of seeking. He had much difficulty in committing himself to something. The social question was on his mind.

In 1936 he started for India by ship. On the way all his money was stolen so he decided to walk to Wardha, the ashram where Gandhi was. He wore a loin-cloth and not a tropical helmet, the status symbol of the Europeans. "On the road I forgot everything I had learned out of books." After some months he arrived in Wardha. He stayed there for 3 months. One of the first things Gandhi said to him was "I advise you to stop all your study-work, train your hands instead." So he started to train in crafts.

His way led him to Gandhi's Yoga teacher. Deep in the Himalayas he heard a voice saying to him "What are you here for, go back and found". He thought of a community of non-violence. When he asked Gandhi about it he answered him "If you are competent, do it." But he didn't know it.

After the 2nd World War he wrote a book "Pilgrimage to the sources", in which he told about his experiences and ideas he had in India. Some people who had read the book came to him and asked him - "We have read your book, but what can we do now?" He explained his exact ideas to them. Among these people was a woman he knew from his work as a musician; he loved her more than his loneliness and they married. But the other result was the foundation of a first community out of which the Ark would develop.

Lanza died in 1981 when he was 79 years old, in Spain where a new branch of the Ark had been set up. He left behind the work of a poet, a musician, a philosopher, a social renewer and a fighter for nonviolence.

THE ARK

In the same way as other great whips of humanity such as hunger, oppression and illness, war has its roots not only in external circumstances but also in the inside of human beings. Lanza spent a long time in research for all these causes and their healing. The Ark is the place, the community, where the results of this research is realised. It's a place of common seeking and experimenting.

The Ark can be defined as; Patriarchal order, Non-violent order, Working Order, Ecumenical order. An Order is a community of people bound together by vows, by the same rule, with a common spirit.

"The order is called Patriarchal in that it is more a tribe than a monastery, a grouping together of families and unmarried men and women wishing to eliminate from their lives falsehood, abuse, the spirit of profit and of domination, causes of the greatest evils of the world.

"The Order is called Working because the Companions work upon things, upon men and upon themselves; upon things by means of manual labor thanks to which they liberate and support themselves without exploiting others; upon men by inviting them to share their life and quest; upon themselves for the knowledge, the possession and the gift of self.

"The Order is called Non-Violent in that its members may be called at any time to take part in either civic or private action against injustice, abuse, falsehood, oppression, cruelty - no matter who the authors are or who the victims - wishing evil to no one, not even to those responsible for the injustice, a struggle against violence beginning within oneself and at home.

"Finally, the Order is called Ecumenical because of its mission of religious reconciliation. It attaches itself to no established church, it preaches no new religion. It demands of each member fidelity to one's own faith, devotion to and deepening of its traditional knowledge. All sectarian or fanatical fury is banished from the Ark, and anti-religious fanaticism even more so."

(quotations from "The Ark; Elements of a Non-Violent World" leaflet)

When you look at the Ark you can find there elements of a nonviolent life. So let's have a look at its spirituality, its social organisation, its economics and its action in society.

Spirituality

A very important fact in the life of the Ark is spiritual preparation. It's not based on a special confession but it is religious. It includes meditation and body exercises, prayers and singing. For all there is a special time reserved during the day. The morning starts with body exercises and a morning prayer, which includes every day a prayer from a different religion, the bread is blessed, and work is interrupted for a short spell each hour to remember that work is not everything, and the day is closed with prayer and singing around a fire.

Each one should study his or her own religion and try to come deeper into it. You should look for the common values with other religions and not for the things which separate.

Lanza himself was a Roman Catholic and he continued practising, even if a lot of his work is inspired by Gandhi. He said, "Gandhi told me how I have to read the bible."

Social organisation

The companions of the Ark are single men or women or couples. The children live there but they have to decide if they want to join or not when they have grown up.

Lanza believed that there are four ways of organising the power: the tribe, the monarchy, the republic and the dictatorship. He believed the tribe was the most comfortable form; social holding together and integration in the group is secured by natural emotional relations. So for the Ark elements of living as a tribe are adopted.

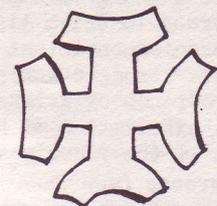
Lanza was a patriarch but this does not mean he was the only decider. He was more the spiritual leader. Decisions which relate to everyone are made by all members of the group. All members are equal and the decision has to be unanimous - this is done because the majority isn't necessarily right.

Conflicts have to be solved without punishment because "the free man punishes himself". If someone is at fault there should be a personal talk with them to show what is wrong. If he or she isn't willing to do reparation then the person who has seen it should do it. This is to train in responsibility; "so the policeman, spy, judge and executioner are disappearing from the scene of justice."

Economics

To create a community which doesn't exploit anyone the Ark is trying to be as self-reliant as possible. They use machines and money as little as possible. They reduce their material needs and want to see their work as a way of self-realisation. Each member learns different jobs. There is no distinction between manual labour and working with the head. Inside the community there is no money circulation because the production is for their own use and it is distributed with regard to needs. There are no sales which Lanza regarded as the modern form of slavery.

War seems to be a direct consequence of property; "So one seizes property to gain peace but one gets war because one owns." Therefore there is no private property, all belongs to the community. And even the common property is reduced; every



THE CROSS OF THE ARK

year at the feast of John the Baptist there should be no money in the common kitty. "It is not economic decline we have to fear but more being rich."

Action in society

One aim of the Ark is to found islands in the different nations where a nonviolent and human living together is possible and to increase the number of these islands.

On one hand there is noncooperation with the social system. Members aren't allowed to get political posts. But there is interaction with society through courses held in the Ark, placements you can do there and through nonviolent direct actions.

"How do you recognise a nonviolent person?" Nonviolence aims at the conscience, it is "in its noblest form aggressive. The nonviolent is going to the place of injustice." So Lanza and members of the Ark were acting against the torture and concentration camps during the Algerian war, with demonstrations and public fasts, and against the bomb, for conscientious objection, for the saving of Larzac. A group of members squatted a farm which already belonged to the military; now the extension to the military camp has been stopped. In 1981 Jon Gyte an English member of the Ark did a fast in London concerning peace in Ireland.

The Ark today

There are more than 100 members of the Ark. They are living near Montpellier divided in three smaller communities, la Borie, Nogaret, La Flayssiere, on the Larzac in Les Truels and last year they opened two more communities, Bonnecombe and Le Grand Mouligne. Also in Spain there is now a community La Longuera, and it is there Lanza died. Friends of the Ark are all over the world.

The Ark offers work and study camps in nonviolence, crafts, meditation and other subjects mainly in summer-time - one in English - and when you have been to one camp you can do a placement there.

The address is; Communauté de l'Arche La Borie Noble, 34260 Le Bousquet d'Orb, France.

See also the article by Padraig O Gormghaile on Lanza del Vasto in Dawn 67, and an account of a visit to the Ark by Judy Johnson in Dawn 85

GOING DUTCH, GOING IRISH

A discussion on nonviolent action, the Netherlands, training, and nonviolence in relation to Northern Ireland; including NEAL BOWEN (from the States, then working for the War Resisters International), ROBIN PERCIVAL (who has lived for the last decade in Derry), PAURIC CANNON, and ROB FAIRMICHAEL (who transcribed and edited the tape). The discussion took place in November 1982.

GOING DUTCH....

Rob Fairmichael - Neal, you're going to be living in a nonviolent action training community in Holland shortly; that seems a bit strange - to have a whole community based on something like that. Can you say something about it and how it relates to your own commitment and development in relation to training.

Neal Bowen - The community is called Meth Medura; it has been going for about 6 years in Amersfoort right in the middle of the Netherlands. 'Meth Medura' is Sanskrit and means a house where people work for peace. The community began to work on rather severe problems in the community they lived in, on suicide and despair and the kind of alienation that arises out of modern living situations, to try to do some repairs in the community; it wasn't specifically involved with action training at that time. But the concerns of the individuals involved led them to be involved in the anti-nuclear movement, anti-nuclear power and then anti-nuclear weapons as well.

While they were in this phase two of them, Addy and Yvonne went to the United States and lived for some time in the Movement for a New Society in Philadelphia and studied their techniques. They came back and with some other people helped to develop this affinity group system, and started offering the training for that. There's also another training centre in the Netherlands, in Amsterdam, but that works at a slightly different level than Meth Medura. Meth Medura is very concerned about both personal change and social change, and in fact they see the two as irrevocably linked. If a group comes to them for training and it works very much on the social sphere and very little on the personal the people at Meth Medura will talk to them a lot about personal change, and if it's the other way around then they'll talk a lot about social change.

Rob - When you were saying about developing work on affinity groups were you talking about affinity

groups as they are normally defined - in terms of trying to build democratic decision making on a mass basis with base groups?

Neal - Yes, but also I wanted to talk about affinity groups in the Netherlands because it's a unique situation that I'm aware of, certainly in Europe and the United States, a unique development of the movement from the traditional kind of groups that anyone recognise exist, like IKV, the inter-church council in the Netherlands. But the fundamental group, the basic core group comprising the progressive movement in the Netherlands is independent affinity groups of say 15 people who work together on several issues, though usually they have a particular issue they are most interested in. They are autonomous, they're not connected to IKV or the larger national groups.

.....the basic core group comprising the progressive movement in the Netherlands is independent affinity groups of say 15 people.....

There are two sorts of trains in the Netherlands that have developed this structure. One is Meth Medura and the work they've done with talking about the affinity group system of organising and another is Onkruit, an anti-militarist action group which isn't pacifist necessarily, although their actions are usually non-violent. It's an extremely decentralised network that doesn't have an office and doesn't have a traditional structure of officers but it's sort of mouth to mouth communication, and person to person organising, which gives them a lot of power and flexibility.

I think the most interesting example of the strength of this kind of organising is last January there was an American weapons ship which docked at Groningen in the Northern Netherlands and loaded up twenty trains to go to an American base in West Germany (it wasn't nuclear weapons). Out of the twenty trains sixteen of them were blockaded on their way through the Netherlands over and over again, two and three times each, and there wasn't a national organisation which organised that action. It was the initiative of the local affinity groups and the cooperation between those affinity groups.

Rob - So you see that as a pretty effective way of campaigning; do you see it as being appropriate elsewhere as well?

Neal - Yes, it's a fascinating development, that's partly why I'm

so interested to go to the Netherlands to learn more about it. It's an effective campaign method but it also sort of fits into my vision of the new society, of devolving responsibility, small structures, and people working in small groups that they are familiar with. I think it's an important development.

Pauric Cannon - Would you call it a collective or a commune, is it a self-supporting group?

Neal - Not living together in most cases. Meth Medura is, but the affinity structure no.

Rob - How did this current situation evolve? What was the inspiration, what was the catalyst?

Neal - I think people saw the effectiveness of organising within affinity groups in some of the large actions they had, though I don't have personal knowledge of this, just stories I've heard. But also a value among Dutch and German activists, particularly in those two countries, is a distrust of authority and a strong need to take personal responsibility for what they are involved in and play an active part in everything that they're involved in, and that sort of structure certainly meets those needs.

I think that training has played an important part in it. And it seems to me from what I know that Meth Medura has played a very big role, it seems a centre that most activists in the Netherlands have had something to do with.

Pauric - Can you tell us a bit more about Meth Medura, how many people are involved?

Neal - There's a core group of 5 living in Meth Medura now, two men and three women. They live in a very large house in Amersfoort and frequently invite in people to live for certain periods of time, while I'm there there'll also be another American there; I'll probably be there for about a year. There's been a woman there from Germany for the last year, and also for people from the Netherlands they provide a safe place for people in crisis to come and live while they decide where to go next. They haven't completely lost that desire to do community reconciliation.

Pauric - What kind of common work do they all engage in?

Neal - Their programme is their full time job for all of them, they don't go out and work other than that so at the moment training takes up the vast majority of their time.

Rob - And funded by?

Neal - They charge for their training, it's professional training. They also charge for a room, very adequate facilities for training and meetings which they rent out on occasion. Plus there is a very interesting group called 'Friends of Meth Medura' which are people in town who agree with the aims of Meth Medura and admire it, and their whole function is to go out and raise funds for Meth Medura, that's how they were able to get this amazing building they're in which used to be a monastery. But Friends of Meth Medura has no impact on policy, no impact on the decisions about what they do, is specifically excluded from those decisions in fact.

Rob - Is there anything else you wanted to say about the experience in the Netherlands?

.....it's not an echo of MNS techniques - they have created their own techniques and expanded on it...

Neal - Yes, the experience of Addy and Yvonne in going to the Movement for a New Society was critical in the development of their training, they have gone a long way from the Movement for a New Society, it's not an echo of MNS techniques - they have created their own techniques and expanded on it, Europeanised it a bit. They've published their own training manual too, which I understand is being translated into English.

I feel it's a place I can learn a lot more about training, especially about process training which is a particular skill of theirs, and mediation which is something that they concentrate on as well.

GOING TRAINING....

Rob - Moving on to discuss some training you've been involved in, maybe to start off with training for nonviolent actions which you've been involved in, but also trainings in group process, that is seeing in the Irish situation there isn't much direct confrontation happening, there are some isolated examples but it's not a regular feature at this stage.

Neal - I'll begin by talking about training as it evolved around the series of annual marches called the International Nonviolent Marches for Demilitarisation. We've had 7 so far. In some ways they are regarded as a basic training ground for nonviolent direct action, it's a way to increase the experience within Ireland of this kind of actions, this is why we'll talk about it. The two years since I've been in Europe I've been on these marches and been involved in the training collective for them.

They're usually two-week marches, and they go to one area or another of Europe; in the 7 years they've been virtually all over Western Europe, on the continent I mean. The 6th march was in the Netherlands, it was actually a static camp in Beilen in north-east Netherlands, and then we went on bicycles from there to various targets around the Netherlands. The training involved in that was training people in affinity groups, a lot of process training, but whenever we had, the camp as a whole, approved particular actions we went through fairly extensive training sessions to prepare for those actions.

To focus on one, there was a blockade of a nuclear weapons depot at Havelteberg at a NATO base there. We knew that on Friday they'd be changing the guards at this base at ten in the morning, and we decided that we would prevent the changing of the guard, as a protest against the positioning of nuclear weapons in the Netherlands. In preparation for this action we actually received messages from the Dutch soldiers union saying "don't do this action as we agree with you, we're against nuclear weapons too", and some of the people in the camp were swayed by that but we decided to go ahead with it because we're not just an anti-nuclear march, we're an anti-militarist march - they agreed with us on a particular issue but not completely.

Anyway we knew we'd be dealing with the military police in the Netherlands, the Marchais, who have a reputation for being brutal with demonstrators; they have lived up to that reputation many times. In fact this particular action had been tried by a Dutch group the year before and it lasted about 15 minutes and then people were beaten. So we went through extensive confrontation training; we role-played the actual situation we'd be in, we prepared people in ways to defend themselves from police violence, to defend each other against police violence, we practised different strategies, we practised different ways of blockading the gates - a technique called the human carpet which was first used in the anti-Vietnam war movement, and other more traditional blockades.

Then we went off very early on Friday, like 3 o'clock in the morning on bicycles to pedal the 24 miles to Havelteberg, riding through the woods because we thought for some reason we'd be surprising then even though we'd received this message from the Dutch army union. We got there and set up and ten o'clock, the time the changing of the guard was supposed to happen, came and went, and ten o'clock at night came and went and we were still sitting there waiting. Not only had we not seen any guards we hadn't seen any police - they left us completely alone sitting on the road. Parts of the group ended up

staying there for 3 full days and the most police we ever saw were two, who would drive up, look at us a bit and go away. We did get coverage from the Dutch television and Dutch radio, and very good coverage from the print media. But nothing from the police and after three days we packed it in and went.

The reason for that story is we prepared very well for the reality we expected to meet. What we hadn't prepared for was the disappointment at having absolutely no visible effect, though they didn't change the guard until after we left, they changed it the next day. We had built up this expectation partly because of the strength of our training techniques of facing this police violence and then when it wasn't there it was very difficult to work through, and in fact was shattering for the marchers.

....we prepared very well for the reality we expected to meet. What we hadn't prepared for was the disappointment at having absolutely no visible effect, though they didn't change the guard until after we left.....

Pauric - So presumably somebody must have informed.

Neal - No, it was a police strategy throughout the march, the whole two-week period they did almost nothing. We ended with I think 30 arrests and that was actually going up to a prison and writing on the walls and they said, wait, this is too much.

Out of the experience though of that march, we had people who were involved in training being the trainers and also involved in their own affinity groups, and that had a very deleterious effect. So we decided to form a trainers collective for the march this last summer, and the international trainers collective met between the two marches to plan a training strategy for the 7th march which was going to be in Spain, in Andalusia. We had a particular interest in developing trainers in French or Latin speaking countries because training as it exists is very much an American, British and Northern European thing. It's very well developed in Germany, in the Netherlands and in the US but less well developed in some other places.

But it seemed culturally inappropriate for the people from the south of Europe so we made some attempt to develop trainers from France and from Italy and from Spain, in preparation for the 7th march. We tried to do pre-march training within the country of origin before people went to the march, we tried to prepare them for cross-cultural realities, like just attending meetings where everything has to be translated three

or four times is a difficult reality, and it takes some getting used to. We also tried to prepare them for the decision making structure of the march which was affinity group structure and consensus from small group to big group.

The marches were very much an experimental series. We're experimenting both with ways of having direct action and training for direct action and also with ways of making decisions that aren't violent.

Rob - Can you say something about training more existing groups? Either for actions or process.

Neal - In Britain where I've been for 17 months it has been more a case of people asking for training without a specific purpose in mind, so we've done a lot of process training. I guess 'process' is jargon, it's training for ways of having meetings and ways of developing responsibility and ways of making decisions that are different from the traditional structures, consensus in not having officers, sharing roles and sharing tasks, involving everyone in all the decisions. That's been the most useful training in Britain recently I think.

.....I guess 'process' is jargon, it's training for ways of having meetings and ways of developing responsibility and ways of making decisions that are different from the traditional structures.....

Rob - I think the situation in Ireland too, that's where you've got to start. OK there have been some actions and even some training in relation to a few actions but when you just survey those groups who are concerned with peace and nonviolence and look at how they operate, and the whole conceptions that people have - it makes you want to run a mile backwards and shelter behind some wall! It's pretty bad.

Neal - The thing about training for process; it's been a concern more within the anti-militarist movement than within the anti-nuclear movement. Lately we've been working a lot with CND groups in Britain and I've been struck by how traditional their organising methods are. It probably has a lot to do with the involvement of the Labour party and traditional trades council people who don't have any experience of the methods we're talking about.

It's been startling to be invited to speak to Chorley CND about non-violent direct action and I'm addressing a meeting with 70 people all facing the same direction, looking at me, and the chairman holding his agenda to himself and dictating decisions out to the group. It was almost a culture shock to me to go

into that situation because the groups I work with are not at all like that, maybe 15 - 20 people and everyone involved.

...But it's not something that a group goes to a specialist and says - 'Tell us how to run our meetings' and goes back and just applies it; I think we have to consciously keep building on the experience and keep using the techniques that are involved in the training.....

Even within those kind of groups which have a different organising focus I found that training has to be built on, has to be continued to be effective. When I became involved with London Peace Action I started agitating to do a little training for process because people were complaining about the meetings being boring and pointless, and it was degenerating to a small group making decisions. We did a bit of training, like one shot training, and it had an effect for a couple of meetings and it started to degenerate again. Fortunately people in the group picked it up and started using it, and training, almost informal training, going on within the group. But it's not something that a group goes to a specialist and says - 'Tell us how to run our meetings' and goes back and just applies it; I think we have to consciously keep building on the experience and keep using the techniques that are involved in the training.

Rob - Just to look at the recent movement experience in Ireland; we had over a few years the involvement, the peaking and decline of the anti-nuclear power movement, which effectively is dead because a victory was won. A lot of people who were involved in the anti-nuclear power movement would now be involved in the anti-nuclear bomb movement which is bigger, it's different and certainly brought in different people. The anti-nuclear power movement, with Carnsore festivals and that sort of thing, generated a lot of publicity but because the ESB (Electricity Supply Board) never actually got to start building the plant there in Wexford there was no direct action. If it had come to the stage there certainly would have been.

In terms of the anti-nuclear bomb movement, in the South because of the tenuous neutrality there's very little to latch on to; OK, the INLA (Irish National Liberation Army) can obliterate a microwave station, and in the North the issue of Cruise missiles, if they were actually being placed, that would generate direct action. Partly why there hasn't been direct action is because there haven't been as many things to latch on to directly, that and the movement not having evolved to that stage.

Neal - I think training for process can help clarify the evolving movement to the stage of direct action. In England direct action has become a sort of panacea in the mind; they have built a huge national movement in CND and now the next stage is direct action. The CND national council has approved direct action and there are some actions and some very good actions taking place, though few and fairly far between. Now there is a great call for training for direct action but they are asking for training without an action planned, so it's theoretical training, and I think that's where training is at its weakest. For training to have an important role to play in direct action it needs to be linked to an action which is actually on the cards. And direct action of course has to be part of an overall campaign and strategy.

Rob - One interesting point about CND in Britain as I understand it is that the central organisation has got around to the stage of approving direct action now, whereas at the end of the 50's and early 60's the direct action was always at the periphery. This time around it's seen as a much more central focus.

Neal - Yes. Joan Ruddock and Bruce Kent are always at pains to point out that they support considered and well planned direct action, and I think that's an appropriate position for them to take. In fact they have come through with some money for the training network which already existed in Britain, not in the sense of giving a grant but supporting and publicising it, actually taking steps to prepare their local groups for direct action.

But I think there is a negative involved with central CND endorsing direct actions because they are thinking in terms of endorsing very large national actions - and there is certainly a role for those. But my own analysis is that local, decentralised direct action is much more important; and if we can spur a real blizzard of direct actions in Britain leading up to the placement of Cruise missiles next December ('83) then that would have a more serious impact on national policy than a few showy staged direct actions even though the large scale national direct actions will undoubtedly generate more publicity.

GOING IRISH....

Rob - I'm just wondering about direct action in relation to the situation in the North. There is a conception within the anti-nuclear movements, be it the anti-nuclear power or bomb movements in Ireland over the past half dozen

years that nonviolent direct action is something to be contemplated and adopted at a certain stage. In the peace groups associated with the Northern situation there hasn't necessarily been that awareness; a few of the groups have done things but it has just tended to be pickets and that kind of thing. Very early in the troubles a group like Women Together in Belfast, which is a fairly traditionally organised but women-only group which still exists with about half a dozen groups around the greater Belfast area, participated in what they didn't label as direct action but was actually going out on the streets and saying - look, lads, stop throwing stones, rioting - that kind of thing. And that no longer seemed possible when the bullets were flying more, the bombs were going off more. If you like the whole situation escalated beyond where any kind of nonviolent response seemed to be getting anywhere or appropriate. And so the people who believed in nonviolence were left high and dry, and we had a lot of people coming out with words that didn't really signify anything very much.

....I think in Britain there has been an embarrassing silence from the pacifist, traditional peace movement on the question of Northern Ireland...

Neal - I think in Britain there has been an embarrassing silence from the pacifist, traditional peace movement on the question of Northern Ireland, not forgetting the BWNIC (British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign) activities and further back; but within the last several years there has been almost a complete lack of campaigning around the issue. They leave the field clear for people like Troops Out who have a different reason for campaigning around the issue. WRI (War Resisters International) in their Triennial in July has asked for international campaigning on the question of Northern Ireland and has asked the people we have in Ireland to provide some focus for international campaigning, and has requested the British sections to campaign on the issue but it remains to be seen whether it will be done.

Robin Percival - I think part of the problem has been that the British peace movement, or pacifist movement, has still to free itself of certain kinds of ways of thinking about Ireland; I would almost call them colonialist ways of thinking. Pacifists in England still perceive what happens in Northern Ireland in terms of Protestants and Catholics rather than in terms of the responsibility of their own country in creating and maintaining division in Ireland.

I think a very good example of that was last year the crisis around the H Block issue; whatever one's views may or may not be on the question of special category or political status for Republican prisoners, it was clear to anybody, certainly anybody in the nonviolent movement, that Britain's handling of the prison situation, its creation of a prison regime which was forcing people to do things which people out in the community weren't prepared to do, for example, integrate, and loyalist and republican to live in the same wings - and that's still occurring today. It was obvious to anyone looking on that Britain was creating a problem which was going to divide Protestant against Catholic.

....I think that reflects still a colonialist mentality on the part of some of the people at least in the British pacifist movement.....

Instead of seeing the way Britain was actually creating a community problem here in Ireland the British peace movement just shied away from it all. In fact if they took any attitude at all it tended to be pro-British government, in terms of saying the Republican prisoners had no right on their side and so on. I think that reflects still a colonialist mentality on the part of some of the people at least in the British pacifist movement.

Rob - I think in that sense the British pacifist movement is typical of a more general attitude in Britain on the matter, so it's not something exclusive. It's part of a wider attitude to Ireland.

Robin - Yes, but can I put it another way. When I went to Perugia for the WRI Triennial (where I was representing Dawn), I arrived in Perugia about a week after the so-called Hyde Park bombs where eleven British soldiers were killed and how many horses were killed, by the IRA. One senior British pacifist was basically going on about the fact of how could the IRA do this and so on. Again in the debate about the motion on Ireland (see Dawns 84 and 87 - Eds.) another leading member of the WRI also from Britain deplored the motion containing no reference to the fact that British soldiers had been killed and injured and so on.

The point I'm trying to make is that at no time while I was in the Triennial did any of the people from the British peace movement express any concern at the fact that British soldiers and police and UDR men - who although from Northern Ireland are in the employ of the British state - have been over the last two or three years been involved in incidents which, for example, have been killing children through the use of plastic bullets. That whole question of the use of plastic bull-

ets, and the fact that plastic bullets have actually killed ten or twelve children (I mean people under the age of 16) including children as young as 9 and 10. That whole question was not seen as an issue.

What was seen as an issue was the IRA attacking British soldiers. Now I'm not saying the IRA attacking British soldiers is right; what I'm saying is that the British peace movement, and its lack of activity on the Irish question, stems from its inability to see things other than from a British point of view. I think that ought to be seen as a serious point of concern for British pacifists, their inability to relate to a war that is actually going on technically in their own country.

Rob - And Irish pacifists?

Robin - Well my view is that apart from one or two people the same criticism must also go to Irish pacifists but I think that Irish pacifists are very few and far between but those who do subscribe to a pacifist position, I think are divided between those who adopt a similar kind of approach - 'if only we Protestants and Catholics could get together' - and those who like Des Wilson and Joe McVeigh realise the problem that trouble in Ireland has been manufactured and created by British involvement and therefore seek to direct their activities and comments to dealing with that question of British involvement in the North.

Neal - While Robin's criticism is fair comment I wouldn't want to leave the impression that there aren't British pacifists who recognise the duplicitous position but there is an unwillingness, say, within the PPU (Peace Pledge Union) to confront a divisive issue and to try to campaign for a campaign for British withdrawal from Northern Ireland from a pacifist position. It is a very divisive issue within the peace movement and so they just don't enter the fray, they ignore it. I think that is in some ways a more serious problem than the colonialist perspective because people do exist who do see it's inconsistent.

Rob - We also would have some differences of opinion on some issues in relation to this within the Dawn group.

Robin - Though I will say this in my experience with the Dawn group, which has at times been intensive and at other times limited, I've always found Dawn magazine - this is a plug folks! - has always been prepared to accept that there are different viewpoints. I think on the other hand being a magazine perhaps it's easier for it to do that than if it was an actual action-oriented group where our differences might actually pre-

vent us from taking action. Our differences don't actually prevent us from producing a magazine; in fact it can help because just as happened over the Peace People you can have an article from one person saying what a marvellous group the Peace People are, or were, and another saying what a lousy group the Peace People are, or were.

Rob - Do you want to focus any more on training in Ireland. Is there a role for training and for trying to build up nonviolent social change in the North in relation to the situation there, or are we on a hiding to nothing?

Robin - One thing I would like to say which doesn't relate to training but relates to what Neal was saying earlier about the WRI and that is that the WRI is looking to Ireland for direction on what it does about Ireland, and that's right and proper.

....I think readers of Dawn and people who relate to it....have to accept that there is a constituency out there in the world....who...are looking to us for some kind of guidance as to what radical nonviolent people should do on the question of Northern Ireland.....

Those of us who see ourselves in the radical nonviolent tradition at the moment we have no movement, we have a small tradition based around Dawn magazine, we have to seriously think about our nonviolence not only in relation to nuclear power and nuclear weaponry but also in relation to the so-called national question, namely the issue of the North. I think readers of Dawn and people who relate to it however casually have to accept that there is a constituency out there in the world that is actually - I think it's important but it may not be influential - who nevertheless are looking to us for some kind of guidance as to what radical nonviolent people should do on the question of Northern Ireland. I think we owe it to them to at least give it some thought, even if at the end of the day we may not come up with very much. Rob, you wanted to say something about training in relation to the North?

Rob - More generally in the North, and I think it applies in a lot of areas - in the community area, the voluntary group area - some things were tried but only half tried and thereby written off. And that relates to nonviolence as well; the experience that people had of the Peace People has made people aware of there being a peace group at the expense of them being less than impressed with it. But that's talking in general and while disagreeing with things that have taken place in the Peace People in the past I would say at the moment they are one of the more progressive groups in terms

of what their actual policies are, and they are dealing with issues like prisons which a lot of peace groups wouldn't touch.

Robin - What I would like to add to that is that the nuclear bomb issue offers the nonviolent movement in the North of Ireland a real opportunity to relate its traditional concerns with mass warfare and the bomb and so on with the particular issue of Northern Ireland, for a number of reasons. First of all because obviously if the bomb goes off there ain't going to be no Northern Ireland to worry about.

But the second and equally important reason is this; the nuclear weapon issue provides us with a real issue around which to campaign which can bring together Catholics and Protestants around a real issue and not around a phoney kind of issue whose real purpose is to bring Catholics and Protestants together,

But thirdly the nuclear issue relates directly to the Northern Ireland issue which has to do with Britain's continued desire to maintain a military presence in Ireland - which has a lot to do with its membership of NATO, and nuclear weapons and the siting of nuclear weapons, and the strategic position of Northern Ireland in relation to the Atlantic etc etc, and the naval and airport facilities.

....the nuclear issue relates directly to the Northern Ireland issue..

It will also provide a mechanism of relating to groups which traditionally we in the peace movement would not even consider relating to - I'm thinking of groups for example like Sinn Fein - whose position is very similar to ours on the question of nuclear weapons and neutrality.

Fourthly it allows us to develop a nonviolent direct action tradition which Ireland lacks. Now while I take Neal's point that we don't want to do direct action for the sake of it and where it becomes a ritualistic thing, there is nevertheless very little tradition of principled nonviolent direct action which provides a radical alternative to either the ballot box or the armalite rifle.

Rob - How do you see direct action will be perceived by the Protestant community in the North?

Robin - I think the Protestant community is like any other community - it's made up of various parts - I don't think you can talk about a homogenous Protestant community. For some I think the idea of law-breaking would come as deeply offensive. But

on the other hand there is a tradition of law-breaking within the Protestant community and in particular in working class areas, the Shankill rent and rates strike for example.

My problem there would be to what extent the loyalist community would be prepared to jettison nuclear weapons realising the intimate links between nuclear weapons and the maintenance of the Northern Ireland state by Britain. That's the hard nut to crack and I wouldn't be sure enough to think that it's crackable but I think if we're honest we have to address that issue directly. I think some in CND don't want to do that because of the potential danger that it might upset Northern loyalists if we make the connection between Britain's link with Northern Ireland and the nuclear weapons thing - and to me the link is direct and clear.

Neal - The role of training in the North is difficult because I'm not clear about what the nonviolent community can do in a direct way to try to resolve the situation in the North - and I'm not talking of a neutralist view of pacifying. Whatever the role is, the primary use of the training at the moment in Ireland at the moment is in developing ideas and developing campaigns; so using the vision and strategy tools and then trying, trying, trying - I don't pretend to have an idea of what the best course of action is at the moment but I don't think anyone else does either. I think you just evaluate a lot of ones that you can generate and try a few and keep plugging away, I'm convinced that there must be a non-violent alternative to the activities of the IRA, for instance. Because I don't think pacifism and neutralism are the same things and they certainly shouldn't be.

Robin - By neutralism you mean?

Neal - Taking the neutral role in conflicts, I don't mean it in the sense of Irish neutrality.

Robin - I think that's a good point, Neal. I think a lot of people, and possibly more in Ireland because of the Northern problem, tend to equate pacifism with being middle-of-the-road, not being one thing or the other but not being particularly anything distinctly different either. I would agree with Neal there that pacifism has to be committed to a whole lot of things - human rights, dignity, democracy in a genuine sense - as well as respect for life and so on.

EDS - THIS DISCUSSION WAS TAPED WITHOUT ANY ASSISTANCE FROM THE GARDAI STICHAIR OR FIANNA FAIL !!!

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GANDHI'S NONVIOLENT HUNGER STRIKES

by JAMES HEALY

Are hunger-strikes non-violent? I believe that some are and some are not. Of course it all depends on what we mean by 'non-violent' - a term with many meanings. Here I want to present some information on Gandhi's fasts because everyone accepts him as one example of non-violence and we need to know what he actually did before we can conclude that any recent - or future - hunger strike is nonviolent in a Gandhian sense.

Gandhi was in South Africa for 20 years and there he began fasting, first for health reasons and then for reasons of religion and self-restraint. He also fasted on two special occasions (for 7, and for 14 days) to do penance for, and to educate, some members of his ashram-community who had misbehaved.

Gandhi was 46 when his adult career in India began; he was 79 when it ended. During these years, 1915-1948, he continued his regular religious fasting: once a week, and two particular annual days. In addition he fasted on seventeen special occasions, which would give an average of one special fast every two years. But in fact these fasts came in clusters: none for three years; eight in eight years; a seven year interlude; five in the next three years and then a four year interlude; one, followed by another four year interlude; another one and another four year interlude; the last two in the final half-year of his life.

A complete list of these 17 fasts is not given in any of the more available books: Gandhi's "Autobiography" (1927) and his "Non-Violence in Peace and War" (2 vols. 1942-49); books on Gandhi by G. Ashe (1968), J.V. Bondurant (1958), E.H. Erikson (1969), Ved Mehta (1976), P. Moon (1968), W.L. Shirer (1979). So the list at the end of this article giving brief details of these fasts is compiled from "Mahatma" by D.G. Tendulkar (8 vols., 1951-54).

It would be impossible to describe even one of these fasts in a few pages. Instead we can discuss the whole series and I shall point out four ways in which Gandhi's fasts differ from some recent Irish hunger strikes: their length, their objectives, their religious dimension and their nonviolent context.

Length of fasts

Before each fast Gandhi decided its length, either for a definite number of days or as 'indefinite', i.e. until either specified conditions were met or he died.

Nine of his Indian fasts had definite lengths: one-day (2), three-day (1), five-day (1), seven-day (2), twenty-one-day (3).

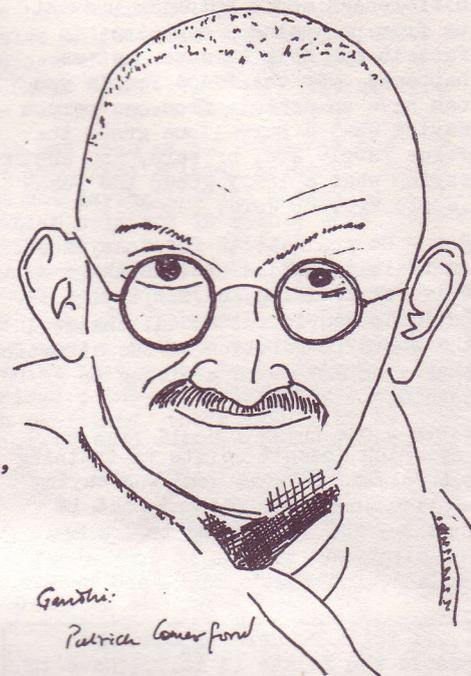
Eight of his Indian fasts were indefinite. In the event they were shorter. They ranged from one-day (1), through three and four day (2), to five-day (2), and six-day (1), to seven-day (1) and eight-day (1). In these indefinite fasts Gandhi began to discuss how to end them almost as soon as he had begun them.

From his experience of the longer fasts he must have known that discussion would prove more difficult as the fast progressed. I am quite sure Gandhi was always prepared to starve to death when he started an indefinite fast, so I am not suggesting that his quick ending of each fast was due to lack of courage or change of mind. I am suggesting that he focussed on the alternative-to-death outcome; he positively desired to avoid death and to have the conditions fulfilled for ending the fast. He did not regard a faster's death as a means towards some objective he, or his party, was trying to achieve. I emphasise this point because it seems to me to be one of the ways in which Gandhi's fasts were different from some Irish hunger-strikes.

Objectives

On each occasion of a special fast Gandhi announced its cause, often explaining this profusely. To identify these causes briefly is to impoverish them, but even such a presentation allows one to notice their variety and how seldom they involve prison. Gandhi fasted;

- to do penance for a member of his ashram;
- to support textile workers taking industrial action;
- to persuade a Ruler to honour an agreement;
- to protest Government's passage of Special Powers laws;
- to protest his own innocence of violence for which he was interned;
- to do penance for the violence of others - twice;



- to support the 'Harijan' ('children of God', i.e. Untouchables) - five times; a franchise law; penance for supporters, twice; prison rules; own prison facilities to work for untouchables.
- to pray and do penance for Hindu-Muslim relations - four times.
- to support Muslims seeking better terms for Turkey.

Hearthfelt unity between all persons and people is clearly the cause running through Gandhi's fasts; at times this required him to work for religious-national unity (Hindu-Muslim-Sikh-Parsi-Christian-British-Jew); at other times for social-religious unity (high caste Hindus and Untouchables); at all times this unity required him to prevent and oppose violence.

One would need a separate study to appreciate Gandhi's extensive views on prison and the conduct of prisoners within a satyagraha campaign. The point for the present study is that he considered fasting as a procedure very rarely suitable for use in prison. This is clear from his own practice and from his remarks on many occasions to prisoners contemplating or already fasting.

Religious fasts

Fasting, for Gandhi, was always a religious activity, a way of relating to God, whether in sorrow or in petition, whether to change his own or others' relationship to God. Of course these seventeen special fasts were also activities within the spheres of industrial relations, or community (ashram) discipline and education, or race relations,

or class relations, or civil liberties, or politics. But the predominant dimension of each fast was religious; it concerned the mind and heart of the faster who was seeking Truth. Gandhi prayed much before deciding to fast. Each fast, he felt, was in reply to a call from God; in each fast he was obeying his inner voice. A fast was also a call to God. At times the days of fasting were an experience of intimacy with God.

In this respect there is a difference between Gandhi's fasts and hunger-strikes in Ireland. Though there is plenty of evidence that persons on hunger-strike in Ireland have been, for example, deeply devout Catholics, their fasting has not been a specifically religious activity in the way Gandhi's was. This is said in order to understand differences which seem to exist between two series of fasts. It is not a condemnation of Irish hunger-strikes.

When a walk is not a pilgrimage it is not thereby anti-religious or a-religious. When a meal is not the Eucharist it is not thereby the activity of a non-religious person. Thus there is a broader sense of 'religious' in which every activity of a person can be religious, and in this sense there need be no difference between Gandhi's fasts and Irish hunger-strikes.

Nonviolent fasts

Gandhi held that some fasts were violent, and also that a nonviolent fast could end in death. For him, then, what makes a fast violent?

Hatred is violent, for Gandhi. So is revenge. And fasting is made violent by such motives as these. Actually Gandhi was much more positive than that. He required a faster to know and respect his opponent; he required that a faster really want the good of his opponent: love. In his own fasts Gandhi loved his opponents. Some public supporters of Irish hunger-strikes have given evidence of hating the opponents of the strikers. I have not enough evidence to say whether or not the strikers themselves had motives which Gandhi would call violent.

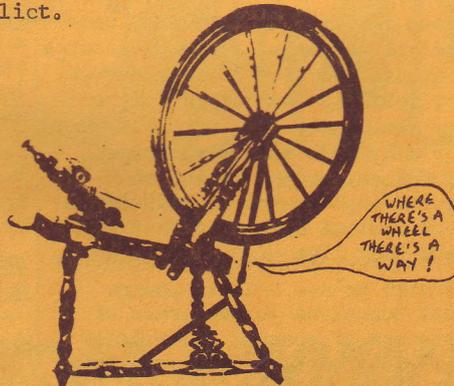
When a fast coerces the opponent it is violent, in Gandhi's view. Coercion occurs when the opponent grants the faster's conditions simply to prevent the faster from dying and not from conviction that the conditions ought anyway to be granted. For Gandhi a fast functions by catching the opponent's attention, even sympathy; this is what the suffering by the faster does.

Then the opponent turns his attention to the cause of the fast. As long as he remains convinced that the cause is wrong he is not responsible for the fast or the faster's death. A convinced opponent ought to let a faster die rather than yield to his conditions or demands.

In thus excluding coercion Gandhi leaves no room for blaming a sincere opponent for a faster's death. (He is not 'blaming' the faster, either). Publicity on behalf of Irish hunger-strikers tends to describe opponents as murderers; and the statements by strikers seem to indicate that they are trying to coerce their opponents; by these criteria the strikes are violent in the Gandhian sense.

When a fast is part of a physical-force campaign it is violent, in Gandhi's view. The use of physical force was always violence, for Gandhi.

In his own campaigns he used various 'weapons': marches, speeches, publications, peaceful breaches of the law, fasts.....for the campaigners these weapons often involve suffering, and belief in the value of one's own suffering is at the heart of Gandhian nonviolence. These weapons were nonviolent in as much as they avoided inflicting physical injury on other persons (or property), and also avoided being supports for such injuries. Used to support political assassination, a speech or a fast became a violent weapon; similarly if used to support a war or any armed conflict.



The difference, therefore, between a violent and nonviolent weapon derived, at times, from the context and circumstances. The intention of the person using the weapon could be decisive. Gandhi himself always intended nonviolence but he at times miscalculated the circumstances and provoked violence and then acknowledged his mistake and did his best to make up for it.

There exists a model of revolution in which an early stage has the revolutionaries engaged in civil disobedience so that the repressive State will respond with violence

and thus provoke mass support for the victim-revolutionaries who can then turn to the use of arms with popular support. Within that scenario the weapon of civil disobedience would be violent, in Gandhi's view.

His life in India was surrounded by terrible violence, from the State, from Hindus, from Muslims. He really knew the kind of things he was trying to avoid and to persuade all Indians to avoid. In Ireland very few fasters have been conscientious objectors to the use of physical force; most have seen hunger-strikes as part of a war, and thus these fasts have been violent in Gandhi's sense. Whether or not the wars were just is not a question here addressed.

GANDHI'S FASTS IN INDIA, 1915~1948

1. 1918, March 15. Indefinite (5 days, to March 19th). At Ahmedabad. To support textile workers on strike. Effective.
2. 1919, April 6. One-day; by whole nation; a hartal. Gandhi in Bombay. To pray and protest against Rowlatt Law giving Government repressive powers. Mass observance, but with violence.
3. 1919, April 13. A three-day fast by Gandhi, and one-day by nation. Against himself. To expiate for recent violence. (4A. 1919, May (10th?). One-day; by Gandhi and Bombay citizens. To protest the deportation to England of Mr Horniman.)
4. 1920, August 1. One-day. By all members of the non-cooperation campaign. To mark campaign's commencement. To support the Muslim Khilafat objection to peace-terms imposed on Turkey.
5. 1921, November 19. Indefinite (4 days, to 22nd). In Bombay. To pray for peace between Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Jews; then rioting. Effective.
6. 1922, February 12. A five-day fast. At Bardoli. In penance for violence at Chauri Chaura.
7. 1924, September 18. A twenty-one day fast. As penance and prayer for Hindu-Muslim unity. In the house of a Muslim, in Delhi.
8. 1925, November 13. A seven-day fast. At ashram, near Ahmedabad. To help a young member of his ashram repent of an error.
- Inte lude of seven years, i.e. un:il September 1932.
9. 1932, September 20. Indefinite (7 days). In Yeravda prison, but

wholly unconnected with this circumstance. To protest the MacDonald Award, a franchise scheme for the Untouchables. Effective. Ended when leaders and Government agreed a new scheme.

10. 1932, December 3. Indefinite (one day). In Yeravda prison. To support a man fasting in another prison on an Untouchability issue. Ended when other faster ended because issue was tackled.

11. 1933, May 8. A twenty-one day fast. Begun in Yeravda prison, but not about a prison issue. Released on first day; completed in a friend's home. To pray for purification of himself and others working for the Untouchables.

12. 1933, August 16. Indefinite (8 days). In Yeravda prison. To obtain

extensive facilities in prison for Untouchable work. Released, apparently dying, on 8th day, and then broke his fast.

13. 1934, August 7. A seven-day fast. At Wardha. For the Untouchables' cause, and as penance for his and all workers' errors in the cause.

Interlude: four years, until March 1939.

14. 1939, March 3. Indefinite (5 days). In Rajkot. To persuade the Ruler to honour an agreement about government reform. Gandhi appealed for help to Viceroy; accepted arbitration by Chief Justice and ended the fast. Very soon judged his appeal mistaken; renounced the arbitration given.

Interlude: four years, until February 1943.

15. 1943, February 10. Twenty-one day. As prisoner, in Aga Khan palace. To protest innocence of responsibility for violence in August 1942.

Interlude: four years, until September 1947.

16. 1947. September 1. Indefinite (3 days). In Calcutta. To end rioting and establish peace. Leaders guarantee peace. Fast broken.

17. 1948, January 13. Indefinite (6 days). In Delhi. To get peace between Hindu, Sikhs and Muslims. Leaders pledged themselves and Gandhi accepted their assurances.

TRAINING REPORT

by Ellen Skillings

We are vehicles of change. Our weakness and our strengths are incorporated into that process but we have at our disposal certain skills and techniques that empower us to instigate change in our society. Often such skills and techniques remain unverballed, unshared and therefore unused.

This past autumn a two weekend workshop entitled 'Training for trainers' took place at the Glenree House, Dublin. The purpose was to train and demystify participants in the specific techniques of 'change through non-violent action' as well as enabling the participants to share these techniques with groups, organizations and other interested individuals. The workshops were sponsored by Dawn and were led by Neil Bowen from War Resisters International in London and drew participants from Glenree Centre for Reconciliation, the Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Dawn, Northern Ireland Peace Forum, the Ecology Party and HOPE Clean Seas Committee.

Beginning with the sharing of dreams for a perfect society (mostly unfettered by the complication of human involvement) the workshops moved on to the work needed to create such a society and finally to the use of specific skills and techniques needed for a definite plan of action. As an example one dream was 'a car-less society'. The dream was reduced to a long and ordered campaign for increased use of bicycles and public transportation in Dublin. The techniques included consensus decision making, role playing, creating a campaign, time lines, using web charts and flow charts, gaining publicity and planning specific actions within campaigns such as bicycle blockading



the dual carriageway during commuter hours (EDS - 'the bicycle kamikaze squad'!).

The result of the two weekends was the establishment of a loose resource pool of trainers for 'nonviolent direct action'. The skills and techniques are easily transmittable and easily adaptable to any number of uses, the philosophy behind them being the empowerment of individuals for non-violent action in whatever context they live.

If we wish to see society change we must ourselves become aware of the process of change. If we dream of a society peopled with creatures unlike ourselves then we dream without hope, for we are both the subjects and objects of change. None of us is too small, or too weak, or too unskilled to create it.

If you are interested in nonviolent direct action training and/or want to be included in the 'list' of 'trainers' and others interested in training (to be published by Dawn) contact Robin Percival, 38 Great James Street, Derry City, phone Derry 66298.

DAWN IS COMPILING A LIST OF TRAINERS AND OTHERS IN IRELAND INTERESTED IN NONVIOLENT ACTION TRAINING - SEE ABOVE

DAWN pamphlets magazines

"An introduction to nonviolent action training" is a 16-page pamphlet produced by Dawn in 1981; includes - why training? evolution of training; spiritual exercises; accounts; tools; resources; bibliography. The short European English language introduction to training. 30p plus postage.

"Nonviolence in Irish History" - Dawn's best-selling pamphlet digs out the strands. 24 pages for only 30p plus postage.

"Neutral on whose side? Irish neutrality today", Dawn's second pamphlet on the subject (1982) with well-known writers teasing out all the issues. 12 pages, 30p plus postage.

While you're at it, why not subscribe to DAWN (monthly or about 10 issues a year); Ireland, Britain, world surface £3.50 for 10 issues, supporting sub £6; airmail worldwide £6, supporting sub £10.

DAWN TRAIN (which you're reading) is a separate occasional publication from the Dawn group; £2 for 4 issues, £3 airmail. ISSUE NO. 1 STILL AVAILABLE PRICE 30p + POSTAGE.

DAWN, 1 Belgrave Square, Rathmines, Dublin 6.

Short review/mention

MANUAL FOR ACTION

by Martin Jelfs, revised by Sandy Merritt. Single copies £2.50 plus 38p postage from Action Resources Group, c/o 13 Mornington Grove, London E3 4NS - write for discount rates on multiple copies.

This 80-odd page A4 book is the most accessible and reasonable priced manual around, and the only European English-language one of this length. While I would hesitate to say 'everyone should have one' since you may or may not like it, it's certainly clear, concise, and well presented. If you're getting it why not get a few more (at discount) to sell around. - RF. (also reviewed Dawn 85)